



March 24, 2026

The Honorable Chairwoman Victoria Gu  
Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies  
Room 313  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903  
**RE: S2197 – Oversight of Artificial Intelligence Technology in Mental Health Care Act**

Good Afternoon Chairwoman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Beth Bixby, and I am the CEO of Tides Family Services. We serve children and families across Rhode Island in behavioral health, juvenile justice, and child welfare, including Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS).

I support the intent of S2197 to establish clear guardrails for the use of artificial intelligence in mental health care. As this technology evolves, it is critical that policy keeps pace—particularly for children and youth with complex behavioral health needs.

From a practical, service-delivery perspective, I would offer the following recommendations:

### **1. Keep Clinical Care Human-Centered**

- The bill appropriately limits AI from engaging in therapeutic communication or making clinical decisions. Maintaining this boundary is essential—especially for youth involved in juvenile justice and child welfare, where trust, clinical judgment, and family engagement are central to outcomes.

### **2. Clarify Appropriate Use**

- AI can be helpful for administrative and documentation support, but should not influence clinical interpretation, risk assessment, or treatment planning. Clear guidance here will help providers use these tools safely and consistently.

### **3. Strengthen Youth-Specific Safeguards**

Children and adolescents require an added layer of protection. We recommend:

- Explicit recognition of youth as a protected population
- Additional caution in crisis response settings, such as MRSS
- Clear guidance for use with youth in state custody



#### 4. Align with Proven Models

- States like Illinois have taken a similar approach—allowing AI as a support tool while maintaining that licensed professionals are fully responsible for care. Rhode Island is well-positioned to build on that model with clear expectations and accountability.

AI can support providers—but it cannot replace the human relationships that are foundational to children’s behavioral health care. With clear guardrails and youth-specific considerations, this bill can strike the right balance between innovation and safety.

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to Rhode Island’s children and families.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth A. Bixby, LICSW  
Chief Executive Officer  
Tides Family Services