



March 25, 2025

Chair Teresa Tanzi
Human Service Subcommittee
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

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David Caprio
President and
Chief Executive Officer

Re: Governor's FY 2026, vis a vis the Department of Health

Dear Chair Tanzi and members of the Committee,

I write today regarding the Department of Health's FY26 budget and the important need to adequately fund the state's home visiting programs. I urge you to ensure that Rhode Island meets the state match requirements by spending \$355,374 in state dollars on evidenced based home visiting in order to draw down the maximum federal Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant funds, so that Rhode Island has sufficient funding to support these vital programs.

For over 190 years, Children's Friend has worked to advance the well-being and healthy development of the youngest and most vulnerable children in Rhode Island. Today, alongside our permanency, nutrition services, child care, Head Start and Pre-K programs, we run a number of vitally important home visiting programs including Healthy Families America (HFA), where we serve approximately 150 families. This long-term home visiting program works with families prenatally through age 4 to cultivate and strengthen nurturing parent-child relationships, promote healthy childhood growth and development, and enhance family functioning.

We thank the General Assembly for passing Medicaid rate increases for First Connections and Healthy Families America last year. Unfortunately, these updated rates have not eliminated the financial challenges of running these home visiting programs, and we are still struggling with the financial viability of continuing to offer these programs.

In FY25, Rhode Island was one of only three states that did not spend the required amount to draw down the full MICHEV federal match amount. For FFY26, Rhode Island should make the \$355,374 investment in order to receive \$1.6 million to fund vital home visiting programs including HFA.

This relatively small investment is not included in the Governor's proposed FY26 budget. We urge you to add the \$355,0374 into the RIDOH budget to ensure we can meet the federal match.

Thank you for your time and review of this testimony, and for your continued efforts to support the children who are the future of our state. If you have further questions or need any additional information, please contact me at dcaprio@cfsri.org.

Sincerely,



David Caprio
President and CEO