



Chair Teresa Tanzi
Human Services Subcommittee
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House

Re: Governor's FY 2026 Budget - Department of Health

Dear Chair Tanzi and members of the Committee,

I write in regard to the Department of Health's FY26 budget and the important need to adequately fund the State's home visiting programs, which support RI's most vulnerable residents. I write to urge you to ensure that RI meets the state funding matching requirements for the federal Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funds. State support would draw down federal funds to sustain and strengthen access to home visiting programs. I request that Rhode Island make the \$355,374 investment in order to receive \$1.6 million to fund MIECHV programs.

My name is Fiona Nicholson, and I am the Director for the Healthy Families of America (HFA) Program at Family Service of Rhode Island. HFA is a MIECHV funded program which is critical in stabilizing our work. HFA is an evidence-based, long-term home visiting program designed to prevent child abuse and neglect, reducing the need for involvement with DCYF. HFA supports prenatal mothers improving birth outcomes and serves families until the child turns 5 years old, improving school readiness. HFA aids reunification of families when DCYF has been involved.

This relatively small investment of \$355,374 is not in the Governor's proposed FY26 budget. I urge you to consider my request to ensure that early childhood services are sustained.

Thank you for your support.

Fiona Nicholson
Program Director for Healthy Families America at Family Service RI