



**TIDES FAMILY SERVICES**

**WE NEVER GIVE UP ON A KID... NEVER!**

215 Washington St.  
West Warwick  
Rhode Island, 02893

Main Office - 401-822-1360

Fax - 401-823-4694

Tidesfs.org

March 5, 2024

The Honorable Susan Donovan, Chairwoman  
Members of House Health and Human Services Committee  
Room 101  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: H7823 - Support**

Chairwoman Donovan and Members of House Health and Human Services Committee:

Tides Family Services is in support of **H7823 An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government—Department of Children Youth and Families** which includes the requirement of the Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) to include a comprehensive needs assessment to be completed before each re-procurement period and no longer than every five years.

Tides Family Services provides a multitude of critical community-based child welfare, juvenile justice and behavioral health programs for children and families throughout the entire State. We bring a broad perspective based on 41 years of providing services to children and families in Rhode Island through contracts with DCYF.

This proposed legislation recognizes the dynamic nature of societal changes, youth and family needs, and evolving best practices and allows DCYF to make informed decisions regarding the purchase of services from private agencies such as Tides Family Services who provide an array of direct care services. A comprehensive needs assessment will create the foundation for DCYF to develop a coordinated and efficient service array to be responsive to the real time needs of the community. Current DCYF policies and practices do not require the completion of a needs assessment prior to issuing a procurement for contracts and this situation creates opportunities for gaps in the service array to go unnoticed.

Tides Family Services supports the establishment of a multidisciplinary team to advise this process and is appreciative of the proposed transparent nature of this process.

An additional consideration for this legislation is for the needs assessment to include a crosswalk of services available to youth through other state departments and funding sources to account for youth who have multi-system involvement and will need cross systems collaboration to ensure all of their needs are met and no child falls through the cracks.. For example, children's substance use is funded through the Department of Behavioral Health Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals and Children's Mobile Response and Stabilization Services is expected to be funded through CCBHC. These are areas of need identified by constituents of Tides Family Services that are not addressed through the DCYF service array.

Respectfully submitted,

*Beth A. Bixby, LICSW*

Beth A. Bixby, MSW, LICSW