



March 21, 2024

The Honorable Representative Susan Donovan
Chair of the House Health and Human Services Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for House Bill 7874 - Mobile Crisis Response for Youth

Mental Health Association of Rhode Island (MHARI) would like to support for House Bill 7874, requiring health insurers to cover acute mental health crisis mobile response and stabilization services. We recognize the critical importance of this legislation in addressing mental health crises and saving lives in our community.

The need for such services is underscored by the alarming statistics on suicide rates. In 2021, 12.7%¹ of adolescents in the United States reported serious thoughts of suicide in the past year, according to data from SAMHSA. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)². Nationally, suicide ranked among the top 9 leading causes of death for people ages 10-64 in 2021, with particularly high rates among youth and young adults ages 10-24 years³.

Individuals facing mental health crises often encounter barriers to accessing timely care, exacerbating their suffering and increasing the risk of tragic outcomes. As a mental health advocate, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges individuals and families endure when navigating fragmented mental health systems. These experiences emphasize the importance of removing barriers and ensuring that crisis intervention services are readily available to those in need.

House Bill 7874 represents a crucial step towards addressing these challenges and improving mental health outcomes in our state. By requiring health insurers to cover acute mental health crisis mobile response and stabilization services, we can provide individuals in crisis with timely intervention and support, ultimately saving lives and promoting mental wellness.

I urge the committee to consider the profound impact of this legislation and to advance it swiftly for the betterment of our state's mental health landscape. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

¹<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt39441/NSDUHDetailedTabs2021/NSDUHDetailedTabs2021/NSDUHDetailedTabsSec6pe2021.htm#tab6.71b>

²<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt39441/NSDUHDetailedTabs2021/NSDUHDetailedTabs2021/NSDUHDetailedTabsSec7pe2021.htm#tab7.18b>

³<https://afsp.org/chapter/rhode-island>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'FR' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

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