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April 10, 2025

RE: In Support of H6118- An Act Relating to Insurance- Accident and Sickness Insurance Policies

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Marty Sinnott. I serve as CEO of Child & Family Services of Rhode Island, a comprehensive human services agency which has supported the State's highest risk youth and families since 1866. Within our family preservation, children's behavioral health and permanency programs where we provide foster care, residential treatment for youth aging out of foster care and independent living programs, we play an important role in the Rhode Island's system of care for the child welfare system and children's behavioral health.

Mobile response and stabilization services (MRSS) are a lifeline for children and families during moments of acute mental health distress. These services provide rapid response, assessment, and early intervention for children and youth experiencing severe behavioral health challenges, such as aggression, self-injury, trauma, severe depression, anxiety, suicidal or homicidal thoughts, and extreme parent-child conflict. Child & Family's wide continuum of evidence-based family preservation programs have provided important in-home supports to families referred by MRSS. Rhode Island is beginning to develop an appropriate alternative to children remaining in emergency rooms or psychiatric hospitals.

Currently, youth who are enrolled in Medicaid will have access to these essential services through Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs). However, according to RI Kids Count, 49% of Rhode Island's children under the age of 19 are covered by private health insurance, most of which is obtained through their parent's employers. It is essential that we close the gap in access to these life-saving services by requiring commercial insurance providers to cover children's mobile response and stabilization services as a bundled service with a rate that is at least equal to the Medicaid rate. This will ensure that all families, regardless of what health plan they are covered by, have access to the care and support they need during times of crisis.

I urge you to support H6118 and thank you for your attention to the matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marty Sinnott", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marty Sinnott

