



November 13, 2025

Prevent Closure of PediPRN

A Critical Support for Children, Families, and Pediatric Healthcare

In 2022, national and state healthcare organizations declared a state of emergency due to the soaring mental health challenges among children and adolescents. Many children nationwide continue to struggle with anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, and other serious mental health conditions. More than one in four Rhode Island children (28.7%) between ages three and seventeen have a diagnosable mental health challenge. Primary care pediatric providers are increasingly managing children's mental and behavioral health needs, and PediPRN has been supporting them since the program was launched with federal funding in 2016. This program will close when the federal grant ends on September 30, 2026, if state funding is not provided.

PediPRN directly helps over 2,500 children each year and benefits many more through continuing education and other training to support the pediatric health care system. Providers receive support through the specialized teleconsultation program, including same-day specialized clinical consultations and resource and referral services for mental health services. PediPRN allows pediatric primary care providers to manage mild-to-moderate pediatric and adolescent mental health needs, reducing long waits for child psychiatrist appointments and preventing ER visits and hospitalizations. PediPRN needs \$640,000 in the FY2027 budget (July-September 2026 is covered by the federal grant) and \$850,000 in the FY2028 budget, as well as future budgets.

We are grateful to see that RI MomsPRN has been included in the Department of Health's proposed FY2027 budget. However, PediPRN was not included. **We urge Governor McKee to ensure the PediPRN program is also included in his proposed FY2027 budget.** A small portion of the \$30 million in new state general revenue generated through the health care assessment could be used, since this program is a vital support to the primary care system. **Every state but Idaho has a psychiatric resource network program, providing vital support to pediatric health care and the children's mental health care system.** Closing this program in Rhode Island will increase the burden on pediatric primary care providers, pediatric mental and behavioral health specialists, emergency rooms, and school-based mental health providers.

Supporting Organizations:

American Academy of Pediatrics – RI Chapter

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists- RI Chapter

Brown Health Medical Group Primary Care

Care Transformation Collaborative – RI

Family Service of Rhode Island

Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program

Mental Health Association of Rhode Island

National Association of Social Workers, RI Chapter

National Education Association Rhode Island (NEARI)

National Network of Child Psychiatry Access Programs

PediPRN

Patient Centered Medical Home – Kids (PCMH-KIDS)

Protect Our Healthcare RI

RI Coalition for Children and Families

RI Council for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

RI Health Center Association

RI Primary Care Corporation

Rhode Island Association for Infant Mental Health (RIAIMH)

Rhode Island Medical Society

Rhode Island MomsPRN

Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Washington County Coalition for Children

Representative Mary Ann Shallcross Smith

Senator Alana DiMario

Zobeida Diaz, MD, Division Director and Attending Psychiatrist at the Center for Women's Behavioral Health at Women & Infants Hospital

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