



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT

ONE UNION STATION
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903
401/351-9400 • 401/351-1758 (FAX)

Testimony Re: Senate Bill 2200 – Medical and Clinical Rate Review and Setting Process

Senate Finance Committee

April 28, 2022

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its strong support for Senate Bill 2200. This bill would require EOHHS to review and provide recommendations for the process of rate setting and ongoing review for all medical and clinical service programs by the state, including Medicaid, with the guidance of a 24-member advisory committee. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to thank Senator DiPalma for his leadership and for sponsoring this bill and would also like to thank the cosponsors, Senators Miller, Ruggerio, Goodwin, McCaffrey, Lombardo, Kallman, Felag, Coyne, and Valverde.

The Importance of Rate Review and Setting Process

- **For ensuring equitable access to high-quality care:** Ensure that reimbursement and rates are accurate and adequate so providers can give high-quality care, especially to families covered by Medicaid. Medicaid recipients experience lower access to care, and evidence shows that provider reimbursement rates play an important role in health care access, utilization, and status. Reviewing and improving the rates for medical and clinical services, including Medicaid, would help close disparities in health care access for adults and families. When parents have quality access to health care services, we know that their children are more likely to receive care and be healthy.
- **For addressing the workforce crisis:** Ensure rates are current and adequate so providers can retain an effective workforce to deliver medical care to children, parents, and families. Currently, low wages for workers in the health care sector along with the COVID-19 pandemic have caused a workforce crisis in Rhode Island and nationally. Medical and clinical programs are struggling to retain staff and low reimbursement rates have hurt their ability to hire, support, and retain staff.

The current rate setting and reimbursement process for medical and clinical services is inadequate for our providers, families, and children. Our reimbursement rates are too low to sustain sufficient access to and utilization of health care services for our most vulnerable populations. **This bill would provide proper oversight of the rate setting and reimbursement process so Rhode Island families have access to the high-quality care they need.** Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.