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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

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A N A C T

RELATING TO INSURANCE -- INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR MENTAL ILLNESS AND  
SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Introduced By: Representatives Fogarty, Cortvriend, McEntee, Kazarian, Cotter,  
Donovan, Speakman, Henries, Hull, and Handy

Date Introduced: March 04, 2024

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 27-38.2 of the General Laws entitled "Insurance Coverage for Mental  
2 Illness and Substance Use Disorders" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **27-38.2-7. Early childhood mental health hub.**

4 (a) The executive office of health and human services (EOHHS) shall establish an early  
5 childhood mental health hub program ("hub") focused on improving access to infant and early  
6 childhood mental health services for children under the age of six (6) years and their families. The  
7 hub shall be funded as a pilot program funded for a minimum of five (5) years to:

8 (1) Train and support infant and early childhood mental health professionals in Rhode  
9 Island;

10 (2) Maintain a registry of infant and early childhood mental health professionals and their  
11 qualifications;

12 (3) Monitor the availability of services, new national recommendations, and advancements  
13 in interventions and therapies; and

14 (4) Make recommendations to Medicaid and behavioral health systems to address gaps.

15 (b) The hub shall be designed to integrate and align with the Rhode Island children's  
16 behavioral health system of care managed by the EOHHS.

17 (c) Needs that are outlined in the Rhode Island infant early childhood mental health plan  
18 shall be early priorities for the hub including:

1           (1) Offering state-supported training and ongoing implementation support for clinicians to  
2 become certified and to use evidence-based, family-based dyadic therapy models for children under  
3 the age of six (6) years, such as child-parent psychotherapy (CPP), parent-child interaction therapy  
4 (PCIT), and attachment and biobehavioral catch-up (ABC). Building the training capacity in the  
5 state by holding train-the-trainers programs should be considered;

6           (2) Offering state-supported training and ongoing implementation support on  
7 developmentally-appropriate screenings to identify mental health challenges in young children  
8 from infancy to under the age of six (6) years;

9           (3) Offering state-supported training and ongoing implementation support for clinicians to  
10 conduct developmentally-appropriate evaluations of mental health in young children under the age  
11 of six (6) years;

12           (4) Advancing equitable access to services and reduce racial and ethnic disparities,  
13 increasing the number of infant and early childhood qualified mental health clinicians who are  
14 bilingual or represent the diverse races, ethnicities, and cultures of young children and families in  
15 Rhode Island; and

16           (5) Serving as a community resource for families and health professionals to find and  
17 connect with effective therapeutic services for young children suffering with mental health  
18 challenges.

19           SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO INSURANCE -- INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR MENTAL ILLNESS AND  
SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

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1           This act would require the EOHHS to establish an early childhood mental health hub  
2 program focused on improving access to infant and early childhood mental health services for  
3 children under the age of six (6) years and their families. The hub would be funded as a pilot  
4 program for a minimum of five (5) years.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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