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RIPTA's New Bus Route 68 Benefits Local Residents

Middletown and Newport July 2022– Health and human service nonprofits located along RIPTA's new Route 68 encourage residents to take advantage of the free "city to beach" shuttle this summer, particularly if they need to get to one of their sites.

Route 68 service connects neighborhoods in the north end of Newport to local beaches. Its route includes a loop around the Aquidneck Corporate Park in Middletown, adjacent to **Child & Family** and the **Rhode Island Department of Human Services** offices both located at 31 John Clarke Road, the **Newport County YMCA** at 792 Valley Road, and **Newport Mental Health** at 127 Johnny Cake Hill.

Route 68 was created as one of two free summer shuttles to alleviate congestion in the city and improve access to downtown Newport and the beaches. Passengers can board this route for free now through October 2022; full fare resumes November 1, 2022. Financial support for this new route comes from the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island.

"Many families and children rely on the RI Department of Human Services for critical support throughout Rhode Island, where transportation remains a barrier for people seeking public benefits," said Yvette M. Mendez, Acting Director of the RI Department of Human Services. "This bus route means more people will have access to essential programs and services from DHS and partners such as Child & Family, whose mission also aligns with ours in helping children and families reach their full potential."

The groups are hopeful RIPTA will continue the route permanently, as a lifeline to city residents without a car or means of other transportation.

"Frequently public transportation is not a viable option due to service routes not including our clinical locations," said Jamie Lehane, president & CEO of NMH. "Route 68 increases critical access to Newport Mental Health's community mental health clinic at 127 Johnny Cake Hill, which results in better quality of life for our neighbors, friends, and family members."