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TTY: 771
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January 30, 2024

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr., Chair
House Committee on Corporations
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 7013 – An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions – Ryan’s Law

Dear Chair Solomon:

Please accept this letter in support of H 7013 with amendments. H 7013 would require any licensing board responsible for governing professional conduct to impose, in addition to any other penalty authorized by law, a probationary period of three years for any licensee found guilty of over-prescribing, death resulting. A subsequent violation during the probationary period may result in a suspension or revocation of licensure. This act would take effect upon passage.

The opioid epidemic is a tremendous public health crisis, with overdoses of prescription and non-prescription opioids claiming a record number of lives and tearing families apart in Rhode Island and across the nation. Overdose deaths are increasing, and, more recently, fentanyl-laced drugs continue to pose a lethal threat to uninformed users. Ryan’s Law must include all practitioners with prescribing authority.

In 2022, 436 Rhode Islanders died from an accidental overdose. In 2023, 325 deaths have been confirmed as of January 29, 2024. (Data for 2023 are not complete and do not reflect the total number of deaths because any deaths that still have a pending cause or manner of death are not included in this total.)

We offer the following proposed amendments for the Committee’s consideration. RIDOH’s proposed edits are in green font.

(f) In addition to any other penalty authorized by law, the board shall impose a probationary period on any licensee **with the authority to prescribe controlled substances found guilty by the board of over prescribing, death resulting, for a minimum period of three (3) years. Any subsequent violation, if substantially related to the conduct or violation for which the licensee is on probation, occurring during a licensee's probationary period may result in a suspension or revocation of licensure.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Utpala Bandy", followed by the word "for" written in a smaller, simpler font.

Utpala Bandy, MD, MPH
Interim Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Corporations
The Honorable Deborah A. Fellela
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel for the Speaker of the House of Representatives
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy