

## Written Testimony Supporting HB7757

Submitted to the House Committee on Health & Human Services

Linda Dziobek, RN 03/19/2024

Good afternoon,

Chair, Representative Susan Donovan, Vice-Chair, Representative Joshua Giraldo and House Health & Human Services Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB7737, which relates to coverage of medically necessary diagnostic breast and supplemental imaging. My name is Linda Dziobek. I am a resident of South Kingstown and a constituent of Representative Tanzi. I am also the paternal granddaughter (lest we not forget that men can get breast cancer too), daughter, niece, and cousin of loved ones diagnosed with breast cancer. I am also living with advanced, recurrent ovarian cancer (and have a BRCA2 variant )which puts me at risk for breast cancer. My daughters also have a BRCA1 and BRACA2 mutation and variant. They are in aggressive screening programs for breast and ovarian cancer.

As a registered nurse, I worked in many different specialties. The last 15 years of my career up to my diagnosis, I was the Director of the Health Care for the Homeless Program in Providence. Many of our patients were uninsured or under insured without access to care. It was my responsibility to arrange for care, diagnostic tests, medications, treatment and referrals. I witnessed first hand the difficulty of women experiencing homelessness in accessing routine diagnostic screenings for breast and cervical cancers. I, on the other hand, have been fortunate to have had a good health plan throughout my almost twenty years of treatment, oncologists, and clinical trials along with close surveillance with CT Scans, MRI's and PET Scans. As a result, I am very aware of the co-pays for scans to monitor my cancer. Recently, on a diagnostic PET Scan a calcification was found on my left breast. This was not seen on my most recent mammogram. It was recommended I follow up with an MRI. An MRI or CT Scan usually cost an average of \$5,500; a PET Scan, \$7,000. My cost share for any of these scans is \$100 - \$150 per scan. I have a PET Scan every 9-12 weeks and CT Scan every three months as necessary to monitor the effects of my treatment. I am able to pay these cost shares because my husband has continued to work part-time in his retirement to help cover these costs. I urge you to please pass HB7737. You may help save the life of a women or man who might otherwise forego the necessary testing due to the cost. Thank you for granting me time to share my story with you.