



RI Department of Health
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TTY: 771
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March 18, 2025

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan, Chair
House Committee on Health and Human Services
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 5432 – An Act Relating to Insurance – Insurance Coverage for Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders

Dear Chair Donovan:

Please accept this letter of conceptual support for H 5432, legislation that would prohibit health insurance providers from requiring pre-authorization for in-network mental health and substance use disorder services. The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) defers to the drafting suggestions presented by the Office of Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC) in its letter to the Committee.

Rhode Island is experiencing both a behavioral health and substance use disorder epidemic. There are evidence-based treatments available to treat these complex clinical issues, including medications. A major barrier preventing access to these life-saving services and medications is the requirement for pre-authorization imposed by health insurance plans, which may lead to delays in care. When a patient presents to a provider and wants treatment for their behavioral health needs, it is critical to their care that this treatment be immediately available to them. RIDOH will continue to educate providers on national guidelines for prescribing critical medications for addressing substance use disorder to those in need.

It is for these reasons that I encourage your favorable consideration of this important public health legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerome M. Larkin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jerome M. Larkin, MD
Director

CC: The Honorable Teresa A. Tanzi
The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy