



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

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Peter F. Neronha
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May 28, 2024

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chairman
House Committee on Judiciary
State House, House Lounge
Providence, RI 02903

Re: HB 7451: ACI Use of FDA-Approved Medication Assisted Treatment

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I write today in support of HB 7451, sponsored by Representative Joseph Solomon, legislation that would establish a program within the Adult Correctional Institutions that makes FDA-approved Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) available to any incarcerated individual undergoing treatment for an opioid use disorder.

As you know, I have prioritized protecting Rhode Islanders from the harms of the ongoing opioid epidemic since the start of my administration. The work of my Office to hold the opioid industry accountable for their role in furthering the devastating opioid epidemic in Rhode Island and across the country has brought \$330 million in cash and lifesaving medication to Rhode Island through settlements resulting from litigation against opioid manufacturers, distributors, and consultants.

Unfortunately, opioid use disorders are highly prevalent among criminal justice-involved populations, and drug overdoses are one of the leading causes of death among individuals released from correctional institutions. Rhode Island is a nationwide leader in the fight against opioid addiction within correctional systems, having been the first in the country to screen every person entering its correctional facilities for opioid use disorder, offering all three forms of medication for the disorder. However, there is still much work to be done.

The passage of this legislation will help us continue this critical work and provide greater care to incarcerated individuals battling opioid use disorders. The use of medication assisted treatment has been shown to reduce opiate withdrawal and cravings and support positive health and criminal justice outcomes, decreasing overdose deaths and recidivism rates and would be an important tool for the Department of Corrections.

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Providing this treatment to incarcerated individuals will help improve their health and well-being, make our communities safer, and reduce the burden on Rhode Island's criminal justice system. For these reasons, I support this legislation and appreciate the Committee's consideration.

Thank you,



Peter F. Neronha
Attorney General