



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals

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March 1, 2021

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chairman
House Committee on Health & Human Services
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**RE: 2021 – H5155 – ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO BEHAVIORAL
HEALTHCARE, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND HOSPITALS - MENTAL
HEALTH LAW**

Dear Chairman Casey:

I write to support H 5155, which would include licensed advanced practice registered nurses (APRN), certified in psychiatric/mental health, as qualified to certify the need for mental health treatment in certain patients.

The revisions in this bill to the Mental Health Law, R.I. Gen. Laws §40.1-5, would be instrumental in supporting the work of our behavioral healthcare providers. Securing the responsibilities of APRNs in the service delivery system can help address the severe physician shortage our providers suffer statewide. More efficient use of both physician and APRN time would benefit patient care by providing more effective management of patient services and establish a safer environment for both provider staff and patients.

The testimony of APRNs certified in psychiatric/mental health in court would be tremendously beneficial in managing physician time, which can be devoted to patient care rather than waiting in court to testify. We believe that certifications should be made by one physician and one APRN.

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

Sincerely,

Kathryn Power, M.Ed., Director

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House