



May 20, 2025

The Honorable Rep. Marvin Abney
Chair, House Finance Committee
Via: HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov

Re: H5320- An Act Relating To Insurance -- Accident And Sickness Insurance Policies

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

Please accept the Rhode Island Health Center Association's letter of **support** for **House Bill 5320**, which would prohibit prior authorization or a step therapy protocol for the prescription of a non-preferred medication for drugs prescribed to treat a severe and disabling mental health condition.

Rhode Island's eight Community Health Centers provide medical, dental, and behavioral health care to 210,000 individuals; 55% of patients are enrolled in Medicaid, and 84% are at or below 200% of the poverty level. Health centers combined had upwards of 130,000 mental health visits. Medication is an essential form of treatment for many health center patients, particularly those with a serious mental illness (SMI) such as schizophrenia.

Step therapy and prior authorization requirements can significantly hinder medical and behavioral health providers from effectively treating patients with SMI. These administrative barriers often delay access to appropriate care, leading to unnecessary patient suffering and increased reliance on emergency services. Reforming insurance policies to reduce medication access barriers would empower providers to deliver timely, effective treatment—ultimately lowering both human and economic costs.

Thank you for your consideration.

M. Campbell

Melissa Campbell
Policy Manager
Rhode Island Health Center Association.

Rhode Island Health Center Association members include:
Blackstone Valley Community Health Care Inc. ~ Comprehensive Community Action Program
East Bay Community Action Program ~ Providence Community Health Centers
Thundermist Health Center ~ Tri-County Community Action Agency
WellOne Primary Medical and Dental Care ~ Wood River Health