

Testimony in Support of HB 7587

An Act Relating to Human Services – Medical Assistance – Prescription Drugs

To: Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee

From: Zachary Gauthier, Johnston, RI

Date: May 14, 2026

Chairman Abney, First Vice Chairwoman Marszalkowski, and members of the House Finance Committee:

I am Zachary Gauthier, and I am here today as a concerned citizen who deeply cares about the wellbeing of every Rhode Islander. I am writing to express my strong support for **House Bill 7587**, a critical piece of legislation that will safeguard our state's future by prioritizing patient health over insurance company profits.

Right now, our system allows managed care organizations to prioritize their bottom line by placing hurdles—such as prior authorizations and **step therapy**—in the path of individuals needing essential anticonvulsant and antipsychotic medications. House Bill 7587 prohibits the Rhode Island medical assistance program and its contracted insurers from requiring these protocols for nonpreferred versions of these life-saving drugs.

For many, these insurance-driven delays are more than just frustrating; they can lead to debilitating seizures, severe mental health crises, and, in some tragic cases, the loss of life. This is a prioritization of corporate gain over human dignity.

By preventing these costly medical emergencies, we are also being fiscally responsible. We are saving our state vital resources that are currently being drained by the fallout of treatment delays. To ensure we proceed with the utmost care, I propose that we implement House Bill 7587 as a **pilot project** to monitor patient outcomes and fiscal impact over a three-year period.

This is not just policy; it is a profound commitment to our community's health. It is smart, it is compassionate, and as a pilot project, it is a responsible path forward.

Thank you for your time, your attention, and your empathy in considering this vital legislation.

Respectfully,

Zachary Gauthier

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