



**Testimony in SUPPORT for H 7625**  
**Vimala Phongsavanh, Senior Director, External Affairs**  
**Planned Parenthood of Southern New England**  
**Rhode Island House Health and Human Services Committee**  
**Thursday, February 29, 2024**

Chair Donovan and honorable members of the House Health and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England with **strong support for House Bill 7625 (Rep. Kislak) to remove barriers to accessing PrEP**. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE), provided sexual and reproductive health care to over 7,000 patients last year at our Providence health center. We believe all people should have access to quality, affordable, and compassionate health care as a basic human right — regardless of who you are, where you live, your income, if you have health insurance or your immigration status.

This legislation will make an important update from last session and ensure that people get access to HIV preventive medications by prohibiting health insurers from subjecting HIV prevention drugs to prior authorization or step therapy. Prior authorization and cost sharing are major obstacles to fulfilling the promise of PrEP to end the HIV epidemic. As an organization providing care to people vulnerable to HIV, we have seen that prior authorization requirements, especially for newer long-acting injectable PrEP, are a major barrier to accessing PrEP. This is especially true for the most vulnerable communities who are less likely to wait for prior authorization and may not pick up their medication after waiting for prior authorization, or who can't adhere to a daily pill and need the injectable and are not getting it due to prior authorization, either waiting or prior authorization being denied. The passage of H 7625 will address this impediment and facilitate access to PrEP for the 65% of Rhode Islanders who need it and do not have it.

Planned Parenthood has been committed for decades to ending the HIV epidemic and has long provided testing and now PrEP and PEP. This bill is an important step to fulfilling the aspiration of ending an epidemic that has claimed the lives of over 700,000 Americans and remains a profoundly life altering, stigmatizing, and medically consequential disease. Thank you for your time and consideration. **Planned Parenthood of Southern New England strongly supports H 7625 to remove barriers to accessing PrEP to ensure that everyone who needs access to PrEP can get it** Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vimala Phongsavanh', written in a cursive style.

**Vimala Phongsavanh, MPA**  
Senior Director, External Affairs  
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England  
175 Broad Street, Providence, RI 02903  
[vimala.phongsavanh@ppsne.org](mailto:vimala.phongsavanh@ppsne.org)