



March 19, 2024

The Honorable Susan Donovan
Chair, House Committee on Health and Human Services
Rhode Island State House
2 Rego Avenue
Bristol, Rhode Island 02809

RE: H 7365 (Caldwell) – Prohibits healthcare entities from interfering with a patient's right to choose to obtain a clinician-administered drug from their provider or pharmacy of choice – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Donovan, First Vice Chair Giraldo, Second Vice Chair Potter, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

Kent Hospital supports H7365, an act which ensures patient choice in dispensing of clinician-administered drugs for Rhode Island.

The practice of “white bagging” occurs when insurance companies make coverage of needed patient-specific medications contingent on the medication being distributed from a third-party specialty pharmacy versus allowing providers to buy and then bill for the medication and its administration or buy from a provider pharmacy of choice. Mandating that providers can no longer procure and manage specialty drugs for their patients disrupts carefully constructed systems of care. Insurance companies should not be able to dictate that a patient must depend on a pharmacy benefit manager to deliver their needed therapies to that healthcare facility. These policies present a number of challenges for patients and providers including:

1. **Safe care for patients:** Confusion for cancer patients. Patients are already navigating a life changing and scary situation and these policies are challenging and confusing.
2. **Patient access to medication:** White bagging policies have directly delayed and disrupted the administration of drugs to patients in RI. Many examples can be shared with committee.
3. **Planning and preparedness:** To ensure the highest quality of care and patient safety, providers must have a clear line of sight into the acquisition, storage, and administration of medications.
4. **Quality of handling:** More complex medications require increased care and attention to ensure product quality control. Clear chain of custody to ensure the highest quality product is essential and is impaired by White Bagging policies.

Kent Hospital believes that patients and providers must have choice in obtaining clinician-administered drugs, and that payers should not be permitted to unilaterally require methods of distribution that disrupt the patient experience and impair the provider's ability to provide optimal patient care.

For these reasons Kent Hospital supports passage of H.7365.

Kent Hospital appreciates your continued commitment to improve access and delivery of high-quality healthcare to all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paari Gopalakrishnan", written over a horizontal line.

Paari Gopalakrishnan, MD, MBA
President/COO