

RI State House House Committee Health and Human Services

82 Smith Street

Providence RI 02903

February 24, 2025

Re: Testimony in Support of House Bill 5351 titled An Act Relating to Health and Safety--Medical Aesthetic Practices Safety Act

Dear Chairperson Donovan and members of the HHS Committee:

My name is Michelle Leveillee from Coventry District 28, am a Certified Nurse Practitioner, belong to the Rhode Island State Nurses Association, the NP Alliance of Rhode Island, the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, the Rhode Island Association of Aesthetic Providers, and the American Nurses Association. I have been a nurse/NP for approximately 13 years, and prior to my career in nursing worked in mental health and research.

I strongly support House Bill 5351 titled "An act relating to health and safety-- medical aesthetic practices safety act for the following reasons:

Under R.I. Gen. Laws (Chapter 5-34), it is said that APRNs are licensed, independent practitioners and after graduating from an accredited program, passing appropriate board examinations, and obtaining licensure by the state board of nursing, may "prescribe, order, procure, administer, dispense, and furnish over-the-counter, legend, and controlled substances as applicable to state and federal laws". Myself, and most if not all of my NP colleagues in the field hold DEA licenses, which now require an 8-hour training for renewal, as I recently went through that certifies we have read, reviewed, learned, and comprehend federal laws regarding controlled substances, their dangers, and, of the utmost importance, maintaining client's/patients' safety when it comes to these drugs. This applies to any product that is considered a controlled substance and utilized in the practice of medical aesthetics, in addition to the non-controlled substances GLPs/GIPs, primarily Semaglutide and Tirzepatide. Multiple drugs that are utilized in aesthetics and skin care are well within our capacity, competency, and scope of practice to be ordered/prescribed and administered due to this additional licensure we hold.

Furthermore, just as with any other on-the-job-training associated with one's professional position(s) observations by a physician or non-physician colleague, who has had extensive experience, practice, and appropriate preparation to carry said training(s), may sign off and certify that the trainee has attended a training, performed what is being trained on with models under observation, and will continue to perform under due diligence and prudent practice. Any medical professional, whether physician or non-physician who serve the public, (providing services that individuals voluntarily sign and attest to in informed consent forms), hold licensures, certifications, have acquired proper education/training should be and complete annual trainings, multiple, if possible, to keep up on the latest technology, medications, products, and safety standards to provide the soundest, most

effective, and best quality care possible. To nurses and APRNs, education, acquiring knowledge, and furthering our competence is what drives us to be practical, highly qualified, and meticulous providers.

In this past year, multiple bills have come through our state's legislative process attacking the practice of nurses and APRNs. Instead of raising the bar for RNs and NPs it seems as if we are going in reverse, which does not seem to make sense in a time when nurses are leaving the field in droves and there are not enough physicians to cover the needs for patients/Rhode Islanders. Now is not the time to further complicate and cripple the state of healthcare in Rhode Island, or destroy the state's economy by attacking any healthcare provider regardless of field of specialty. One might see aesthetics as a field of vanity, but in reality, as aesthetic providers we provide not only services of beauty, but services that boost people's self-esteem, confidence in themselves, and in turn help with underlying mental health issues. Mental health, as we all know, is a significant problem throughout the country, and especially in RI. Anything to benefit generalized health makes people feel good and want to continue to take care of themselves; this is something many of us in this field of medicine, RNs and NPs alike, strive to do and enjoy seeing the positive results, outcomes, and happiness in our patients'/clients' faces (no pun intended).

Limiting scope of practice for RNs in this field will also take a huge toll on our local economy, as many individuals rely on income in providing these services to their clients/patients, but in turn these clients/patients also rely on us to provide them a service. For us, providing these aesthetic services is not "just about money" but doing what we like to do and blending a passion for art and medicine (science), which although to many may seem superficial, to us and our clientele it is not. It would be disappointing to see our clients/patients having to go over the border of nearby states to seek out services we are more than capable of providing in our own state. Therefore, again impacting our local economy by losing clientele, as well as, the potential of an increase in unemployment for those RNs or NPs who are unable to continue their passion in this field.

The value and importance of RNs and NPs, primarily in aesthetics, seems to be misunderstood and undervalued because we are being attacked by a group of dermatological providers. The reality is that there are an innumerable number of clients/patients that need, desire, and love the services we provide, and in essence there "is enough to go around". Dermatological providers may choose to provide aesthetic services, but they also provide care and treatment that is invaluable with the rise and incidence and prevalence of skin conditions, including skin cancer. Therefore, I urge you to support House Bill 5351, to keep Rhode Island businesses open, keep our state economy going, help people keep their jobs and livelihoods, and ensure that people not only receive the dermatological care they need, but also receive these aesthetics benefits that may lead to improved mental health and overall health of Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

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Coventry District 28