

Steven Sepe

From: Kelly Ciapciak <KellyC@thundermisthealth.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 11:30 AM
To: House Health and Human Services Committee
Subject: In support of House Bill 5629

Dear Chair Donovan and distinguished members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Dr. Kelly Ciapciak I am from Providence, RI. I am a primary care physician working at Thundermist Health Center.

I am testifying in strong support of House Bill 5629 (Rep. Alzate). This bill will improve access to family building health care by aligning fertility health care insurance coverage with the medical standard of care, which clearly includes LGBTQ+ and single people, among others, so more Rhode Island residents have the opportunity to build their family. Fertility health care is essential for building families, and it is something that my patients request access to quite often.

Current Rhode Island law requires private insurance providers to cover fertility health care only for people who meet a limited definition of "infertility" that is defined in reference to heterosexual intercourse. Under this narrow definition, single individuals and LGBTQ+ families are typically excluded from this coverage requirement. Paying out-of-pocket for fertility health care is not accessible for most people, leaving them without the care they need to build their family. The cost of fertility health care, such as In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF), can range from a thousand to tens of thousands of dollars in out of pocket costs.

This is an important reproductive justice issue. Every person should have access to the care they need, including fertility health care, to decide if, when, and how they have children and build their families.

Access to fertility health care is also an important aspect of reproductive rights. Last year the Alabama Supreme Court ruling set off chaos in Alabama for patients that rely on IVF to build their families and is the clearest demonstration yet of the many ways anti-abortion laws, including "personhood" laws, threaten contraception, fertility health care, and all sexual and reproductive health care.

I support H 5629 because access to family-building health care such as IVF is essential health care for so many people in our state. This is an urgent reproductive and economic justice issue because all people have the right to have children regardless of who they are or how much they earn. With the current hostile political landscape for reproductive health, our state must do everything we can to stand for the fundamental right for people to be able to decide whether, when, and how to have children. I urge the committee and legislature to vote favorably for H 5629 to improve fertility health care coverage and update our state law, which is outdated and doesn't reflect the standard of health care, so more Rhode Island residents have access to the essential medical care they need to build their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kelly Ciapciak, DO
Primary Care Physician
Osteopathic Neuromusculoskeletal Medicine Specialist

Thundermist Health Center of West Warwick
186 Providence St
West Warwick, RI 02893