

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
14 Harrington Road  
Cranston, RI 02920-3080

TEL: (401) 462-3201  
FAX: (401) 462-3204  
TDD: (401) 462-6087

March 10, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary  
State House

Providence, RI 02903

**RE: 2026 — H 7634 — An Act Relating to Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals—Mental Health Law (Dept. of BHDDH)**

Dear Chair McEntee:

Please accept this letter of support regarding H 7634 which would provide that Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) as defined in the Mental Health Law (MHL), R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 40.1-5, have the same immunity from liability as physicians and surgeons.

This bill would amend § 40.1-5-41 to give Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), as defined in the MHL, the same immunity that physicians have under the MHL in exercising the same responsibilities. It also will strike “surgeons” from this statute, as physicians acting in their capacity as surgeons do not have a role in the MHL. The bill also adds the stipulation that liability is not waived if the actions of a physician or an APRN constitute “gross, willful or wanton negligence” and specifies that physicians and APRNs having a privilege to practice in RI are covered by current and proposed immunity provisions.

In 2023, an amendment to the MHL was passed which allows APRNs to file civil court and emergency certifications, actions which were previously restricted to physicians. However, the amendment did not address immunity for APRNs. This legislation will address this inequity and will provide APRNs with the same liability protections afforded to physicians performing the same functions pursuant to the MHL.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the Honorable Members of this Committee to recommend passage of H 7634.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Leclerc".

Richard Leclerc  
Director

cc: Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary  
Honorable David A. Bennett  
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House  
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy