



Chair Susan Donovan
Health and Human Services Committee
Rhode Island State House

Date: March 3, 2026

Testimony RE: H7349, An Act RELATING TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND HOSPITALS -- OVERSIGHT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGY IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE ACT

Dear Chair Donovan and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony with respect to H7349. We are appreciative that your committee is reviewing this important legislation in 2026. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an increasingly serious consideration in the provision of mental health services both in Rhode Island and nationwide. There have been reports of AI chatbots providing therapy to vulnerable individuals leading to tragic and preventable outcomes like patient suicide or serious harm. As a result, NASW chapters around the country are working to address this issue to protect consumers and ensure that those providing therapy are licensed in the state. Last year, both Illinois and Nevada passed legislation limiting chatbots as therapists. NASW-RI is in strong support of advancing similar legislation here in Rhode Island.

The legislation before you, H7349, is an important step towards regulating AI in mental health. For this, we are supportive. At the same time, there are details within the bill that we may recommend be amended. These are details we hope to iron out but not issues that should in any way derail the legislation. We are eager to work with Rep. Spears and the co-sponsors of this bill. We are working closely with Rep. Shallcross Smith on similar legislation that mirrors Illinois and Nevada. Our hope is that through this iterative process we can collaborate with all stakeholders to achieve the best policy outcome here in Rhode Island.

Please let us know if you'd like to meet to discuss this further. We would welcome the opportunity to do so.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebekah Gewirtz".

Rebekah Gewirtz
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