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House Health and Human Services Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street, Room 135
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

The Rhode Island Psychological Association (RIPA) respectfully writes to express strong support for **H7943**, legislation that would prohibit health insurance companies from requiring prior authorization for in-network mental and behavioral health care services. This bill represents an important step toward removing administrative barriers that often delay or prevent Rhode Islanders from receiving timely behavioral health treatment.

Mental health and substance use disorders affect individuals and families across Rhode Island, and timely access to treatment is critical. Unfortunately, prior authorization requirements frequently create unnecessary delays in care, even when patients are seeking services from clinicians who are already credentialed and participating within an insurer's network. These delays can interrupt treatment, worsen symptoms, and in some cases contribute to avoidable crises that require higher levels of care.

H7943 addresses this problem by eliminating prior authorization requirements for in-network behavioral health services, ensuring that patients can access care from qualified providers without unnecessary administrative obstacles. When individuals are seeking care from clinicians who have already been vetted and approved by their insurer's network, additional authorization requirements provide little clinical benefit while creating burdens for patients and providers alike.

Psychologists and other behavioral health professionals across Rhode Island routinely see the impact of these delays on patients. Administrative requirements can consume significant clinical resources and create uncertainty for individuals seeking help during periods of psychological distress. Removing prior authorization requirements for in-network care allows clinicians to focus on delivering treatment rather than navigating complex approval processes.

Improving timely access to mental health care benefits not only patients, but the broader health care system as well. When individuals receive appropriate treatment earlier, there are fewer emergency department visits, fewer hospitalizations, and better overall health outcomes. Policies that reduce unnecessary barriers to care ultimately strengthen Rhode Island's behavioral health infrastructure.

Rhode Island has been a leader in advancing access to behavioral health services and protecting patients' rights to receive equitable care. Passage of H7943 would further this commitment by



ensuring that Rhode Islanders can obtain mental and behavioral health services from in-network providers without unnecessary delays caused by prior authorization requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and for your continued commitment to improving access to mental and behavioral health care for Rhode Islanders. We respectfully urge the Committee to support H7943.

Sincerely,

Joseph Trunzo, Ph.D. – Past President
Julie Wolter, Psy.D. – Federal Advocacy Coordinator