



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE
John O. Pastore Center
35 Howard Avenue, Bldg. #55
Cranston, RI 02920

Representative Susan R. Donovan, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

March 12, 2026

Re: 2026 – H 7943
By: Representative Tanzi, McGaw, Alzate, Spears, Speakman, Donovan, Batista,
Shanley, Stewart and Kislak
Entitled: AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE – INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR
MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Dear Chair Donovan and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

The Office of the Mental Health Advocate (OMHA) is an independent state agency charged with protecting the civil and liberty interests and advocating for the treatment rights of individuals living with serious mental illness. OMHA strongly supports this bill, which would prohibit health insurance companies from requiring prior authorization for in-network mental and behavioral healthcare services. Prior authorization causes unnecessary and often harmful delays in access to care and undermines clinical judgment and treatment decisions made by mental health professionals. Treatment should be available at the time an individual decides they need it; delay can discourage an individual from continuing to seek the care they need, leading to dangerous and life-threatening situations. Care decisions should be made by the patient and the treating provider, not insurance companies.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Megan N. Clingham
Megan N. Clingham, Esq.
Director
Office of the Mental Health
Advocate