



# RHODE ISLAND MEDICAL SOCIETY

Honorable Jane Donovan  
Chair  
House Committee on Health & Human Services  
Room 135  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: 26-J7539

SUPPORT

March 24, 2026

Dear Chair Donovan,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Medical Society (RIMS), I am writing in support of H7539, which makes important updates to the Benefit Determination and Utilization Review Act, including strengthening protections related to step therapy and utilization review practices.

We appreciate Representative McGaw and the sponsors for continuing to advance this work.

As we shared in prior testimony, step therapy protocols, while intended to manage costs, can create significant barriers to timely, medically appropriate care. Patients are often required to try and fail treatments that may be ineffective or inappropriate before gaining access to the therapy their physician has determined is most appropriate. This can result in delays in care, worsening of conditions, and unnecessary patient burden.

H7539 builds on prior efforts by establishing clearer standards for step therapy exceptions, including when a treatment is contraindicated, has already been tried and failed, or would delay medically necessary care. The bill also creates defined timelines for insurer responses and ensures continuity of care while an exception request or appeal is under review. These are meaningful improvements that support both patients and providers.

Importantly, the bill also includes broader utilization review protections that reinforce clinical decision-making. Requiring that adverse benefit determinations be made by a licensed provider with the same licensure as the ordering clinician helps ensure that medical decisions are grounded in appropriate expertise. In addition, protections against retrospective denials, when care has already been authorized and delivered, provide needed certainty for both patients and providers.

RIMS also supports provisions that enhance transparency and oversight, including the ability for the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner to evaluate whether step therapy protocols are delaying or denying medically necessary care. These data-driven approaches will be important in continuing to refine and improve the system over time.

Physicians across Rhode Island continue to experience significant administrative burden related to prior authorization, utilization review, and coverage determinations. While we have made progress in recent years, additional work is needed to ensure that these processes support, rather than hinder, patient care.

H7539 represents a thoughtful step forward in improving the balance between appropriate utilization management and timely access to care.

We strongly encourage the Committee to act favorably on this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NH', written in a cursive style.

Nadine Himelfarb, MD  
President  
Rhode Island Medical Society