

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

My name is Rose Ann Huynh and hail from Providence. I am an Obstetrician and Gynecologist serving patients across Rhode Island.

I write in strong support of H8245: An Act Relating to Insurance -- Accident and Sickness Insurance Policies, which would require the state and private insurers covering prescription hormone therapy to dispense twelve months' worth of medication as a single prescription. This legislation represents a critical step forward in ensuring continuity of care for Rhode Island patients while simultaneously reducing healthcare costs for our state.

Preventing Lapses in Care and Ensuring Access to Essential Medications

Medication nonadherence is a pervasive public health crisis. Nationally, 30-50% of medications for chronic conditions are not taken as prescribed, contributing to 125,000 deaths and 10% of all hospitalizations annually. The primary barrier to adherence is often logistical—patients must repeatedly navigate the refill process, creating multiple opportunities for treatment interruption. By providing a full year's supply of hormone therapy, H8245 eliminates eleven potential points of failure in the medication supply chain, ensuring patients have uninterrupted access to the medications they need.

The medical literature consistently demonstrates that extended prescription supplies improve medication adherence and patient outcomes. Studies show that synchronized refill schedules and extended-day supplies are associated with significant improvements in medication adherence, with some interventions showing up to 33% improvement in adherence rates. Patients receiving 90-day supplies demonstrate statistically higher medication possession ratios compared to those receiving 30-day supplies.

For patients requiring hormone therapy—whether for gender-affirming care, menopausal symptoms, or other medical conditions—continuity of treatment is not merely convenient; it is medically essential. Continuous treatment is critical to achieving therapeutic goals and preventing adverse health outcomes. Interruptions in hormone therapy can precipitate acute medical crises, emergency department visits, and hospitalizations—all of which are preventable with consistent medication access.

Substantial Cost Savings for the State

Perhaps most compelling from a fiscal perspective, H8245 will save Rhode Island taxpayers money. Medication nonadherence costs the U.S. healthcare system between \$100-300 billion annually, primarily through preventable emergency department visits and hospitalizations. Studies demonstrate that prescription noncompliance is a contributing factor in 22% of emergency department visits, with the average ED charge per noncompliant patient exceeding \$576, and hospital admissions for medication noncompliance averaging nearly \$5,000 per patient.

By contrast, ensuring continuous medication access through 12-month prescriptions prevents these costly downstream consequences. Research on medication dispensing programs shows dramatic cost-effectiveness, with some programs saving \$95,477 while spending only \$4,050 on medication provision. Emergency department medication dispensing programs have demonstrated significant reductions in return visits and hospital admissions within both 7 and 30 days.

For the state of Rhode Island, preventing even a modest number of emergency department visits and hospitalizations through improved medication access will generate savings that far exceed any administrative costs associated with implementing this legislation.

Conclusion

H8245 represents evidence-based policy that aligns patient welfare with fiscal responsibility. By ensuring that Rhode Island patients have uninterrupted access to prescribed hormone therapy, we will improve health outcomes, reduce preventable emergency care utilization, and save taxpayer dollars.

I urge the House to pass H8245 without delay.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rose Ann Huynh". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Rose Ann Huynh, MD, MS
Obstetrician/Gynecologist
Providence, Rhode Island