

## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



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April 9, 2026

The Honorable Melissa A. Murray, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

### **RE: 2026 — S 2109 — An Act Relating to Insurance – Benefit Determination and Utilization Review Act**

Dear Chair Murray:

Please accept this letter of support regarding S 2109, which prohibits insurers or pharmacy benefit managers from requiring or conducting a prospective or concurrent review for prescription medication that is used in the treatment of alcohol or opioid use disorder.

BHDDH is committed to expanding access to evidence-based care amid our state's persistent alcohol and opioid use challenges. Prior authorization barriers often delay treatment by days or weeks, increasing the risk of relapses, overdoses, and emergency interventions that undermine recovery and strain both the public health system and the public conscience. S 2109 represents a crucial step forward. By reducing these administrative hurdles, we can improve medication adherence, which directly supports long-term recovery and lowers overall healthcare costs.

Opioid withdrawal occurs when an individual suddenly decreases or stops their prolonged use of an opioid, including certain prescription medications utilized to treat opioid use disorders. This process triggers a variety of symptoms both physical and psychological, as the body adapts to the absence of the medication. Common symptoms include diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. To hold or deny a person's withdrawal medication could lead that person to purchase an illicit substance which then could lead to a potential overdose or death.

Withholding or denying prescriptions used to treat alcohol use disorders also may result in severe withdrawal symptoms including cardiac issues, hallucinations, seizures, and delirium tremens (DTs) which may be fatal. Evidence-based interventions, including FDA authorized medications used to treat substance use disorders, are effective and should be as accessible to persons experiencing these disorders as possible.

Given the ongoing impact of overdoses in Rhode Island, where hundreds still die each year despite declines, we must continue to identify and address unnecessary barriers that delay treatment and place more people at risk. By reducing administrative obstacles, S 2109 would strengthen Rhode Island's response to the overdose crisis.

I encourage the Honorable Members of this Committee to recommend passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Leclerc". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Richard Leclerc  
Director

cc: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
The Honorable Lori Urso  
Kristen Silvia, Director of Legislation and Deputy Chief of Staff