



Testimony in Support of S2467
Insurance Coverage For Mental Illness And Substance Use Disorders
March 24, 2026

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Latino Policy Institute (LPI), I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of S2467. This legislation would strengthen mental health and substance use disorder coverage protections and prohibit prior authorization requirements for in-network behavioral health services, helping ensure that Rhode Islanders can access timely and appropriate care.

LPI is committed to advancing equitable access to health, economic opportunity, and wellbeing for Latino and historically underserved communities across the state. Access to mental health and substance use treatment is essential not only for individual health outcomes, but also for workforce participation, family stability, and community resilience. Yet too many residents continue to face structural barriers such as administrative delays, restrictive cost-sharing practices, and limited coverage pathways that prevent them from receiving care when they need it most.

S2467 represents an important step toward addressing these challenges. By ensuring parity in coverage for behavioral health treatment and eliminating prior authorization requirements for in-network services, this legislation would help reduce delays in care that can exacerbate health conditions and increase long-term system costs. Research consistently shows that early access to behavioral health services is associated with improved health outcomes, reduced emergency department utilization, and stronger employment stability.

These reforms are particularly significant for communities of color, including Latino residents in Rhode Island, who often experience additional barriers related to affordability, language access, stigma, and provider shortages. Aligning cost-sharing requirements for behavioral health counseling visits with those applied to primary care visits also reinforces the principle that mental health is fundamental to whole-person health and preventive care.

Strengthening behavioral health parity is not only a public health priority but also an economic one. Expanding access to timely treatment can support workforce productivity, reduce avoidable hospitalizations, and improve long-term community wellbeing. Policies like S2467 help move Rhode Island toward a more equitable and sustainable health system. For these reasons, the Latino Policy Institute respectfully urges the Committee to support passage of S2467.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership in advancing policies that promote equitable access to care.

Sincerely,
Awilda Reinoso Lopez
Senior Policy & Research Manager
Latino Policy Institute