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Chairperson Murray and members of the Senate Health and Human Services committee,

My name is Dayna Gladstein, and I am the President and CEO of Newport Mental Health. I am submitting testimony in support of SB2467, I strongly support this critical legislation and believe it will have a profound impact on the lives of Rhode Islanders seeking mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

This bill clearly supports one of Newport Mental Health's key initiatives: to improve the lives of Rhode Islanders. The proposed adjustment to insurance coverage for Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders removing prior authorization is a crucial step at a time when health care costs continue to rise, and access is being restricted by outside forces. This bill will be crucial in standardizing care for your constituents and improving their lives.

In my opinion, here are the key points that underscore the importance of eliminating prior authorizations for behavioral health care:

- **Access to Care:** Eliminating prior authorizations will improve access to necessary treatments, especially for vulnerable populations who face additional barriers in navigating the complexities of our healthcare system.
- **Delays in Care:** Prior authorizations often cause delays in treatment, which can be particularly detrimental for patients with behavioral health needs. Timely access to care is crucial for effective treatment and recovery.
- **Provider Burnout:** The administrative burden associated with prior authorizations contributes to provider burnout, further exacerbating the healthcare workforce crisis in Rhode Island. Reducing these administrative burdens will help improve provider's well-being and retention.
- **Cost and Efficiency:** Providers spend a significant amount of time on administrative tasks related to prior authorizations, which detract from direct patient care. Eliminating prior authorizations will reduce healthcare costs by minimizing administrative expenses and improving the efficiency of care delivery while simultaneously improving direct patient care.

I urge you to support SB2467, as a crucial piece of legislation for the welfare of our citizens. By doing so, you will be helping to break down the barriers to mental health care that far too many Rhode Islanders face. This legislation helps ensure that regardless of their mental health needs, Rhode Islanders have access to the care they deserve and can obtain that care when they need it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Respectfully submitted,

Dayna Gladstein,

LICSW President & CEO



Newport Mental Health