



To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
From: Care New England Health System
Date: April 16, 2026
Subject: CNE Testimony on S 2687 — An Act Relating To Insurance -- The Protect Mental Health Act

Dear Chairwoman Murray and members of the Committee,

Care New England (CNE) Health System is a trusted, integrated health care organization that fuels the latest advances in medical research, attracts the nation’s top specialty-trained doctors, features nationally recognized services and cutting-edge programs, and engages in the important discussions people need to have about their health. CNE is helping to transform the future of health care, providing a leading voice in the ongoing effort to ensure the health of the individuals and communities we serve. With over 8,000 employees throughout Rhode Island, we are the fourth-largest employer and second-largest health system in the Ocean State.

Care New England offers strong support for S2687- the Protect Mental Health Act. As a leading provider of behavioral health services through Butler Hospital and a comprehensive health system serving patients across Rhode Island, we see firsthand the consequences of gaps in insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorder care.

Mental health and substance use disorders are fundamental components of overall health, yet too many patients continue to face barriers to accessing timely and appropriate care due to limitations in insurance coverage. While federal parity laws exist, enforcement and meaningful compliance remain inconsistent, resulting in ongoing disparities between behavioral health services and medical or surgical care.

This legislation takes an important step forward by strengthening accountability and requiring insurers to evaluate and demonstrate that treatment limitations do not create unequal access to mental health and substance use services. Its focus on nonquantitative treatment limitations, including network adequacy and utilization management, directly addresses the real-world barriers patients encounter when seeking care.

Equally important is the bill’s emphasis on ensuring meaningful benefits across all classifications, so that coverage is not only technically compliant but also clinically meaningful for patients in need of care. From a provider perspective, inadequate coverage contributes to delays in treatment, increased reliance on emergency departments, and higher long-term costs across the healthcare system.

Strengthening parity requirements will improve access to preventive and early intervention services, which are essential to improving patient outcomes and reducing strain on higher acuity settings. Care New England strongly supports this legislation as an important step toward achieving true parity and ensuring that Rhode Islanders have equitable access to behavioral health care.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary E. Marran
President & Chief Operating Officer, Butler Hospital
Chief Administrative Officer, Care New England