



Chair Lampton, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Miranda and members of the House Insurance Committee: thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 130 on behalf of the Ohio Counseling Association.

The increasing mental health needs of Ohioans today demands prompt, responsive care from providers. Unfortunately, the level of administrative insurance burdens in today's healthcare system consumes much of the precious time counselors should be spending directly with patients. Onerous prior authorization requirements in particular create roadblocks that usurp the clinical judgment of providers. These burdens delay counselors' ability to deliver much-needed care, increasing the risk of harm to patients.

Counselors know the extent of the treatment each of their patients require. They are clinical experts in the diagnoses they treat. Yet the current system allows standardized prior authorization requirements to be applied without any consideration for the tailored needs of each patient or provider history. These treatment delays can worsen patient conditions or extend the time period that patients need treatment.

High performing health care providers with a track record for consistently adhering to evidence-based care should be trusted to progress their patients' treatment without excessive red tape. That is why OCA supports the commonsense solution proposed in HB 130. If high performing counselors are able to be granted gold card status for their prior authorization, patients could access the care they need in a more timely manner without red tape putting the patient process at risk. OCA believes HB 130 will result in positive outcomes by further streamlining care and reducing some of the unnecessary administrative burdens associated with treatment. We thank the bill sponsor for creating a solution that appropriately balances insurer and provider needs, and urge support for the bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.