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Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of NAMI Kansas, our affiliates, and our members. My name is Madison Elliott. I'm the Public Policy & Advocacy Director of NAMI Kansas. We are a state organization under NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, which is the country's largest grassroots mental health organization. With our affiliates across the state, NAMI Kansas provides programs of education, support, and advocacy for people living with mental illness, their families, and friends.

NAMI Kansas supports HB 2259 to eliminate the imposition of requirements for prior authorization and other restrictions on medications used to treat mental illness for medicaid recipients. Additionally, NAMI Kansas supports the abolishment of the mental health medication advisory committee (MHMAC).

Reasons for Support:

- Restrictions, such as prior authorizations, therapeutic substitutions, and step therapy, are often put into place by insurers as a cost-saving strategy. While restrictions may reduce costs on medication, there is evidence that restrictions on certain mental health medications increase likelihood of mental health hospitalization and increase odds of imprisonment.¹³
- Providers have expressed that prior authorizations increase their administrative burdens, frequently delay patient care, and lead to negative clinical outcomes.²
- Enforcement of Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) compliance is increasing.² Requiring the elimination of prior authorizations and other restrictions placed on mental health medications for medicaid recipients decreases the likelihood of parity violations. This also decreases documentation needed to demonstrate MHPAEA compliance and fines associated with any potential, determined violations.²

1. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/97269931.pdf>

2. <https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/examining-prior-authorization-in-health-insurance/>