

Hello and good afternoon Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee.

My name is Destiney Stackhouse and I am a UConn MSW student. I am here today to speak about House Bill No. 5254, AN ACT REQUIRING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR MEDICATION-ASSISTED TREATMENT FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER and why I support the bill.

As a future social worker, addiction and drug abuse are challenges that my future clients may face when I am out in the field. The combination of medication, counseling, and behavioral therapies can help people sustain recovery. With the passing of this bill, many Connecticut residents can get the help they need to stop the problem before it leads to a tragedy.

According to a story by the University of Connecticut in Science Daily, the rate of opioid overdose deaths in the state is higher than the national average. In 2017, Connecticut had the eighth highest rate of opioid overdose deaths in the nation<sup>1</sup>. According to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, in 2019 there were 1,127 opioid related deaths in Connecticut<sup>2</sup>. Requiring health insurance companies to cover medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder will help combat this issue in Connecticut.

This bill should be supported so that Connecticut residents can get the help they need with little worry about the financial burden, that can come from seeking help. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Connecticut. (2019). Drug overdose deaths in CT doubled in 6 years. *Science Daily*. Retrieved from [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191029182501.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/10/191029182501.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. (2020). Connecticut Accidental Drug Intoxication Deaths. Retrieved from <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OCME/Statistics/Calendar-Years-2012-to-2019-final.pdf?la=en>