

Insurance and Real Estate Committee
February 27, 2020

Testimony in Support of:

H.B. No. 5248, H.B. No. 5254, An Act Establishing A Task Force To Study Health Insurance Coverage for Peer Support Services In This State.

H.B. No. 5254, An Act Requiring Health Insurance Coverage For Medication-Assisted Treatment For Opioid Use Disorder

H.B. No. 5256 An Act Concerning Required Health Insurance Coverage For Detoxification And Substance Abuse Services

Co-Chairs Scanlon and Lesser; Vice Chairs Dathan and Hartley; Ranking Member Pavalock-D'Amato and Kelly; and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

My name is Cathy Renzulli-Valente.

I had finally found my soulmate, Kevin, and we were married in 1993. He became dad to my two beautiful daughters, and, in 1994 we welcomed our son into this world. I had no idea he was addicted to pain meds as he was very good at keeping it secret. Eventually I found out and begged him to go to rehab. Finally he gave in and agreed to go. The night before he was to go in, he used heroin (probably his first time according to the ME, due to amount found in his system) and passed away. He left behind his wife, 3 beautiful children and friends and family that were absolutely blown away by his death. How could such a young (32) vibrant, educated, hardworking man die from this? Opioids don't discriminate! They take precious lives every single minute of every single day and devastate families in the blink of an eye. It has been almost 20 years and I miss him every day, his children miss him everyday.

Please help so this horrible epidemic is stopped in its tracks! Those of us left behind implore you to take the steps necessary for this to happen.

I am urging you to consider these bills to ensure insurance companies are required to provide help to those seeking services and to utilize MAT as a standard form of treatment, the data suggests this is one of the most successful ways to help those recovering from addiction.