August 6, 2021

Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery
Julian Cyr, Chair
Adrian Madaro, Chair
24 Beacon St.
Room 312-E
Boston, MA 02133
julian.cyr@masenate.gov

Re: Bill H. 2105 An Act providing signature authority for psychiatric nurse mental health clinical nurse specialists

Dear Senator Cyr, Representative Madaro, and members of the Joint Committee:

The American Nurses Association Massachusetts respectfully submits testimony regarding H. 2105, An Act providing signature authority for Psychiatric Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialists (PMHCNS). AMANASS is the largest voluntary professional nursing organization in Massachusetts representing Registered Nurses in all care settings throughout the Commonwealth. We are a constituent member of the American Nurses Association, which represents over 4 million registered nurses across the nation. ANA Massachusetts is at the forefront of advocating for our profession and improving the quality of health care for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H. 2105, An Act providing signature authority for Psychiatric Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialists (PMHCNS). This legislation simply corrects an oversight and ensures signature authority for PMHCNS in Massachusetts.

Simply, it gives PMHCNS the same ability as Nurse Practitioners, when any law or rule requires a signature, certification, stamp, verification, affidavit or endorsement by a provider, when relating to physical or mental health, the ability to fulfil this requirement. Examples of these forms include workman’s compensation, medical leave, family medical leave application, guardianship, and educational tutor forms. Patients often have time sensitive forms that require a provider signature and the ability to obtain one in a timely way creates a burdensome inefficiency that prevents patients in need of receiving psychiatric care from receiving needed services to which they would otherwise be entitled.

PMHCNS are advanced practice registered nurses with master’s degrees who practice in the same role as psychiatric mental health nurse practitioners, who have enjoyed signatory authority since 2016. Ultimately, an act providing signatory authority for PMHCNS would promote fairness and reduce health care costs by improving systemic efficiency.

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Thank you for your time and attention to this incredibly important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cc: Representative Kay Khan, RN, PMHCNS