



March 12, 2024

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

We write in support of SF 3532 (Morrison) and are grateful for the hearing on this important issue that is relevant for so many of the patients and families Gillette Children's serves.

Gillette Children's operates an independent, nonprofit, specialty care, 60-bed pediatric hospital in St. Paul along with pediatric specialty clinics across Minnesota, including clinics in Burnsville, Maple Grove, St. Paul, Baxter, Bemidji, Duluth, Willmar and Mankato.

We serve children with complex disabilities, rare conditions, and traumatic injuries with a focus on brain, bone and movement conditions needing specialized expertise. Each year, we treat patients from all 87 Minnesota counties.

This legislation provides for meaningful reform that will remove some of the many barriers the children we serve face in obtaining access to needed and timely health care services. One example is the language in Section 8, which will improve the prior authorization experience for patients with chronic conditions.

The largest single diagnosis we see in patients at Gillette Children's is cerebral palsy - a group of disorders that affect a person's ability to move and maintain balance and posture. Cerebral palsy is a lifelong condition and would meet the definition of a chronic condition. It is caused by brain injury or atypical brain development that happens around the time of birth or early in life. It is a complex condition that can affect many parts of the body, including muscles. Muscle spasticity - the presence of overly tight muscle - is a common symptom of cerebral palsy.

There is no cure for spasticity. Treatment, however, often lessens the severity of spasticity's effects on everyday activities. One of the treatments available is botulinum toxin (Botox) injections.

Gillette Children's employs 14 FTE's whose sole role is processing prior authorizations. Two of our employees only process prior authorizations for Botox. One of our employees works on Medicaid Botox prior authorizations and one employee focuses on commercial insurance Botox prior authorizations.

In 2023 we submitted 1,485 prior authorizations for Botox. Of those, only 14 were initially denied - approximately 1%. As of our most recent records, 1,200 of these prior authorizations have been approved, and the remainder are either currently going through the prior authorization process or have been approved in 2024 but are not yet reflected in our reports.

With passage of this legislation, once a Botox prior authorization for a child with cerebral palsy has been approved, the prior authorization would remain in place unless the standard of treatment changes. This is just one example of a provision in this bill that will positively impact

the patients and families we serve at Gillette Children's while removing a significant administrative burden. We urge your support, and we are grateful for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paula Montgomery", with a stylized, flowing script.

Paula Montgomery
Executive Vice President
Chief Administrative Officer
Gillette Children's