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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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July 28, 2023

Katie Merritt
Director of Policy and Planning
Office of Insurance Commissioner
1326 Strawberry Square
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Director Merritt:

I write today to urge you to add coverage of approved anti-obesity medications and treatments to Pennsylvania's essential health benefits (EHB) package.

Under the Affordable Care Act, individual and small group (50 or fewer employees) health insurance policies must cover the ten categories of EHBs. Each state can select a benchmark plan to describe what specific benefits must be included in each EHB category.

Pennsylvania is behind the times. We have not updated our benchmark plan since 2017. The Insurance Department's reevaluation of Pennsylvania's EHB package shows the department's commitment to ensuring consumers get the care they need, when they need it.

In the coming weeks, I plan to introduce legislation in the House similar to Senate Bill 544, to require insurance coverage for approved anti-obesity medications and procedures. These treatments can have lifesaving outcomes for individuals with obesity. Many individuals who are prescribed and would benefit from treatment for obesity are unable to afford their physician's recommended medications or procedures because their health insurance neither covers nor reimburses those services.

Ensuring coverage of anti-obesity treatments and medications in Pennsylvania's EHB package would give more individuals with obesity access to lifesaving interventions. I urge you to ensure that coverage of anti-obesity treatments is included in any update to Pennsylvania's EHB package.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle Friel Otten".

Danielle Friel Otten
State Representative
155th Legislative District