

Dear Health Care Committee,

I am grateful for your work to reduce the burden of prior authorization on primary care. These unreasonable demands from third-party payers waste valuable resources while delaying and interrupting care to patients. Our office is a Federally Qualified Health Center. We had to hire staff to address the burden of prior authorization for medications and imaging studies so our providers could continue to devote their time to seeing patients. This means taxpayer dollars that are supposed to support increased patient services end up diverted to meet the burdens imposed by insurers. We have no choice but to comply for our patients to receive the care they need.

These burdens supposedly reduce healthcare costs. That is hard to believe given in my experience:

1. The studies and medications I order always get authorized,
2. If we can't receive the authorization in the timeframe clinically required, patients may go to the emergency room for the same services, where they will often also receive additional unnecessary services,
3. The expense to the insurer to hire staff who are medically unqualified to question my orders only increases administrative expense to the healthcare system.

These requirements also increase patient anxiety. Imagine having the worst headache of your life, presenting to your primary care provider, and being told you need imaging to ensure you are not experiencing a bleed or an aneurysm, and then being told you must wait for prior authorization. Or imagine you've been on a steroid inhaler that has controlled your asthma for years, but now you must change to a different brand because the insurer cut a deal with a different manufacturer. Will the new medication work as well? Will you encounter unwanted effects? Will you be able to obtain your medication without interruption? None of this is necessary.

My administrative staff appreciates the measures proposed in H.766 and believe this will free up time for more important tasks. I believe it will do so without increasing expense to Medicaid or other payers. If they no longer need staff to question my judgment unnecessarily, perhaps costs will go down.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Melissa Volansky, M.D.