

Dear House Committee on Health Care,

I want to thank you for helping us to decrease the administrative burdens in our healthcare system to increase access to our patients.

While we appreciate what the Senate has done in H-766 to eliminate the Prior Authorizations for Primary Care Providers, the rehabilitation experts (Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Speech and Language Pathologists) also have this huge burden. We are asking to have us added to the providers that have Prior Authorizations eliminated.

Having access to PT/OT and SLP helps get people back to work when out on workman's comp, it helps to decrease the risk of falls, it helps to minimize the negative impacts that developmental disorders can have on children/their family/and schools, and it helps people decrease pain and improve function, which can limit use of pain medications.

I have been in contact with Sandi Raymond Hoffman from DVHA and her suggestion is to see if there are some diagnoses that we can make an "exempt list" from Prior Authorizations. While helpful for some, this is not a great solution for our state. Between the pediatric therapists (seeing kids with Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, Torticollis, Neonatal abstinence syndrome and other birth abnormalities) and the therapists that see complex adult patients (Head trauma, Stroke, loss of limb, etc) there are too many diagnoses. Eliminating the prior authorizations for our rehabilitation services would help decreased the administrative burden and help improve access to care for the patients. We do not have enough therapists to treat all the people in VT that are in need. Eliminating the Prior Authorizations may even help bring more professionals to our state.

This year, Excellus BC BS of NY has eliminated the prior authorizations for PT and OT so they clearly see the benefit and even cost savings that increased access to rehabilitation services can provide. We can improve the overall health of society.

I urge you to expand the elimination of Prior Authorizations to include Physical Therapy and the other rehabilitation experts (PT/OT/SLP) and not just Primary Care Providers.

Thank you for all of the hard work that you do. It is much appreciated.
Please let me know if you have any questions.

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