



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

2704 Commerce Drive, Suite A ♦ Harrisburg, PA 17110 ♦ p 717.564.5365 ♦ f 717.564.4235

CONTACT: Bryan D. Peach, Director of Media and Public Relations
direct 717.395.0048 ♦ email bpeach@pafp.com ♦ www.pafp.com ♦ www.pafp.com/press

Op-ed: Now is time for prior authorization reform in Pa.

(HARRISBURG, PA. April 7, 2017) Under the guise of cost saving and patient safety, health insurers use a process called prior authorization to decide whether they will cover a procedure or treatment before it is able to be ordered by their family physician. Unfortunately, prior authorization requirements have become overly burdensome for physicians and patients, and a barrier to accessible care.

Prior authorization often jeopardizes patient care by delaying or disallowing patient tests, treatments, and procedures. It actually makes care costlier and less efficient, while giving the insurer – not the patient's trusted physician – the final say on care. Many Pennsylvanians have experienced significant delays in medical care due to this method.

State Representative Marguerite Quinn will soon be introducing legislation in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to deal with the problem. We at the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians consider this one of our top legislative priorities for the 2017-18 session. The bill's goal is to increase transparency and consistency in prior authorization criteria, to improve response times, and to develop simpler forms for doctors.

This is as much a patient issue as it is a physician issue. Working together, we can make health care better for all Pennsylvanians.

Edward Zurad, MD
President
The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians

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