Prior authorization is a process whereby a prescriber must obtain approval from an insurance plan before a patient's prescribed treatment is approved. This is a time-consuming process that often involves a patient going to the pharmacy only to be turned away because they have not obtained the proper authorization. Where treatment is delayed or the patient does not return and fails to comply with their physician's treatment plan, the consequences can be devastating. According to a 2017 AMA survey, 92% of physicians reported that prior authorization caused delays in their patients' care, and 78% reported that prior authorizations sometimes led to treatment abandonment. Prior authorization also creates a burden for physicians who are then required to spend extra time seeking approvals from insurers for medications they have already prescribed.

The American College of Rheumatology supports H.R. 4841, the Standardizing Electronic Prior Authorization for Safe Prescribing Act of 2018. This legislation would help Medicare patients access needed medications more quickly by streamlining the prior authorization process.

Some commercial plans have been adopting electronic prior authorization, which allows prescribers to request, and insurers to grant, prior authorization quickly through technology. Adopting a similar electronic process for Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans will help America's seniors access needed medications more easily and efficiently.

Benefits of Electronic Prior Authorization

- Streamlines the prescribing process
- Allows physicians to spend more time with patients
- Eliminates frustrating delays
- Allows patients to get the prescriptions they need more quickly

Abandoned Treatment Associated with PA

For those patients whose treatment requires Prior Authorization (PA), how often do issues related to this process lead to patients abandoning their recommended course of treatment?

Total does not equal 100% due to rounding.

SOURCE: 2017 AMA SURVEY


- Requires the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to develop electronic prior authorization standards for Part D and Medicare Advantage plans.
- Bipartisan legislation introduced by Reps. David Schweikert (R-AZ), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Bill Johnson (R-OH), and Mike Thompson (D-CA)
- House: Co-sponsor H.R. 4841
- Senate: Introduce companion legislation to H.R. 4841