



February 28, 2023
Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Dear Chair Wiklund and Committee Members,

On behalf of Children's Minnesota and Gillette Children's, we are writing in support of [SF1129](#) which improves transparency and processes of the Drug Formulary Committee. We're very supportive of this bill as well as the author's amendment that will be offered.

We have been experiencing significant issues with MA patients getting timely access to liquid versions of medications. Many liquid medications have prior authorization (PA) requirements that are unnecessary and delay patient care. Here are two examples:

- **Liquid methadone for management of pain and withdrawal symptoms.** Liquid methadone is used to provide comfort to kids receiving hospice and palliative care, and it is used to treat babies born dependent on opioids, avoiding hospital stays for serious withdrawal symptoms. The liquid version of methadone is necessary as pills or other versions do not come in appropriate doses for babies and children. Current delays in PA processing are leaving kids in pain and are causing families to have to choose between paying for the medication out of pocket or admitting their baby to the hospital where the medications are covered.
- **Patients who use a feeding tube.** Liquid versions of medications are a necessity for patients with a feeding tube so the feeding tube doesn't get obstructed causing unnecessary ER visits and hospital stays. Many liquid versions of medications require a prior authorization process solely to demonstrate that the patient cannot swallow a pill. Patients with feeding tubes cannot swallow pills and need liquid forms of medications.

The author's amendment will address these issues by doing the following:

- Prohibit prior authorization for liquid forms of medication if a patient uses a feeding tube
- Prohibit prior authorization on liquid methadone

Just last week, three days after a PA for liquid methadone was submitted, a child receiving palliative care was still 600th in line for DHS to consider the PA request. These delays are unnecessary, avoidable and this amendment includes common sense ways to ensure sick kids aren't in pain or having to unnecessarily be in the hospital. We hope we can count on your support for the authors amendment as well as the underlying bill.

Sincerely,

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