

March 11, 2024

Dear Senate Health and Human Services Committee Members,

On behalf of the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP), the largest physician specialty society in Minnesota representing over 3,100 family physicians and physicians in training, I strongly encourage your support for Senate File 3532. The prior authorizations addressed in SF 3532 pose an unacceptable barrier to essential care for our patients and present a burdensome administrative challenge, diverting our members and their teams from direct patient care.

Family physicians play an important role in caring for Minnesotans throughout their lifespan. As leaders in primary care, we collaborate with our teams to maintain our patients' health and manage chronic conditions. Every family physician has countless stories of the detrimental delays caused by prior authorizations, and it is a major driver of physician as well as health care team burnout. These delays result in patients being denied access to vital medications for managing conditions such as diabetes and substance use disorders in addition to delaying discovery of life altering diagnoses.

The excessive use of prior authorizations, even for generic and cost-effective medications and treatments, is concerning. It is perplexing that these barriers persist, particularly for well-established options that have proven to be evidence-based and first-line treatments for the patient. Utilizing prior authorization as an obstacle between a patient suffering from substance use disorder and the life-saving treatment Suboxone is both counterproductive and unacceptable. Using prior authorization to delay a CT scan after an x-ray showed an abnormality thereby delaying a cancer diagnosis can literally cost a patient their life. Instances where patients are unable to fill their prescriptions and receive needed imaging or tests promptly, particularly in crisis situations, underscore the urgent need for reform.

Prior authorizations are an ineffective strategy for controlling health care costs. The resulting delays in care are unacceptable for patients and the convoluted processes associated with addressing prior authorizations are further burdening our already strained health care workforce. Please support SF 3532 as an important step in addressing prior authorizations to help ensure access to care for our patients.

Sincerely,



Bob Jeske, MD
President, MAFP