

Konrad Jackson

From: K Mitchell <kmitchellfacp@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 07, 2024 5:31 PM
To: Senate Labor and Commerce
Subject: Support for SB 219

April 7, 2024

Senator David Wilson and Members of the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee,

I write as President-elect of the Alaska State Medical Association (ASMA) to support passage of SB 219, reducing the burden of prior authorization in Alaska.

Prior authorization requirements consume a substantial amount of office staff and physician time, without evidence for patient benefit.

According to data collected in 2022 by the American Medical Association (AMA), 94% of surveyed physicians report that the prior authorization process resulted in delays in care for their patients, 89% report that the process had a negative impact on patient outcomes, and 88% describe a high or extremely high burden on physicians and their office staff. Over 80 percent of surveyed physicians observed that the PA process led to higher utilization of health care resources.

We see these impacts daily in Alaskan medical offices, where medical assistants spend many hours every day filling out forms, on hold and in discussion with insurers about authorization for medications, tests, or treatments that a physician has prescribed for a patient. The common insurance strategy of insisting on a "Peer-to-Peer" review means that a practicing clinician has to call the insurance company in a very short time window and wait on hold to speak with an insurance physician, who may not even practice in the same field. This reviewing doctor may not even have read the medical records, so the Alaskan physician reads the existing medical record aloud, and in my experience, the original treatment is almost always approved. This process pulls practicing physicians away from patient care, something that does not benefit any of us.

The high administrative burden in healthcare is a leading cause of physician burnout according to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. On behalf of ASMA I urge you to pass SB 219.

Thank You

Kristin Mitchell MD, FACP
President-elect Alaska State Medical Association

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2019. *Taking Action against Clinician Burnout: A Systems Approach to Professional Well-Being*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; 10.17226/25521.