

March 26, 2024

The Honorable Mike Prax
House Health and Social Services
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, 120 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Support for HB 187, Timely Access to Life-saving Care

Chairman Prax,

I am writing on behalf of the Community Oncology Alliance (COA) to express our strong support for House Bill 187, also known as the Alaska Gold Card prior authorization bill.

COA is the only nonprofit organization in the United States dedicated solely to independent community oncology practices, which serve the majority of Americans receiving treatment for cancer. As a representative of community practices in Alaska, we adamantly oppose the excessive use of prior authorization requirements by health insurers for vital cancer treatments.

In recent years, our members and their patients have experienced increased delays in care caused by the bureaucratic authorization requirements utilized by insurers and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs), which waste valuable physician and staff time while inserting non-oncologist reviewers into critically important treatment decisions. These processes too often prevent Alaskans living with cancer from receiving timely access to life-saving care.

House Bill 187 is an important step towards reforming the prior authorization system for patients in Alaska. By easing requirements for responsible clinicians, this bill has the potential to improve outcomes and quality of life for Alaskans across the state.

COA firmly believes that timely access to treatment should take precedence over administrative obstacles like prior authorization. We urge the committee to support and pass House Bill 187 and continue advocating for policies that protect cancer patients' access to care. No patient should have to wait weeks or months to begin treatment due to insurer and PBM bureaucracy.

Modern cancer care demands an overhaul of the prior authorization process, and the Alaska Gold Card bill is a positive step in the right direction.

Thank you for your consideration of this crucial issue impacting Alaskans living with cancer and the community oncology practices that serve them. For a more in-depth look at this issue, we invite you to review the Community Oncology Alliance's [position statement on prior authorization](#). If you have any follow up questions or would like assistance on any policy issue involving oncology, we can be reached at jlee@coacancer.org.

Sincerely,

James Lee
Director, State Regulation & Policy
Community Oncology Alliance (COA)