



March 20, 2024

The Honorable Chairman Bjorkman
The Honorable Vice Chair Bishop
Alaska State Legislature
Senate Labor and Commerce Committee

RE: Pacific Health Coalition's Opposition to SB 219, Prior Auth Exempt for Health Providers

Dear Chairman Bjorkman and Vice Chair Bishop and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Pacific Health Coalition, I am writing to respectfully express our opposition to SB 219 legislation that requires health plans to exempt certain providers from having to complete the prior authorization process.

The Pacific Health Coalition's health plans are focused on ensuring that patients get the right treatment, at the right time and place, and at the right cost. Prior authorization is a critical tool for preventing fraud, waste and abuse; and is an effective tool that helps to lower patient's out-of-pocket costs, protects patients from overuse, misuse, or unnecessary or potentially harmful care, and ensure care is consistent with evidence-based practices before patient care is delivered.

Broadly waiving prior authorization could lead to clinically inappropriate care, in addition to exposing patients to potential harm by using a service or drug where there is little to no evidence of a clinical benefit, or determining whether a patient meets clinical criteria for the service. If prior authorization is waived and determined to as not medically necessary, the patient is potentially responsible for the cost. Prior authorization can inform patients in advance of the service, allowing patients to make decisions about their healthcare.

We respectfully request that the Senate Labor & Commerce Committee not support HB 219.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Payson

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