

Doctor Bozyk Testimony:

Thank you, Chair Kahle and members of the House Health Policy Committee, for allowing me the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 247. My name is Paul Bozyk. I am a board-certified pulmonologist from Royal Oak and past President of the Oakland County Medical Society. Alongside my colleague Doctor Nita Kulkarni, I am here on behalf of the Michigan State Medical Society and the Health Can't Wait coalition to share why Senate Bill 247 and prior authorization reform is so important to Michigan's patients.

More than three years ago, physicians, patients, health care providers, advocacy associations, and non profit organizations joined together to seek legislation that puts Michigan patients first and ends delays in patients' access to health care. Throughout this time, patients and physicians have continued to advocate for sensible reform to the burdensome prior authorization process. The current prior authorization procedures are used to delay—and sometimes flat out deny—patients from accessing the treatments that have been prescribed by their physicians—treatments we know our patients need.

There are two points I want to be very clear about: Senate Bill 247 does not eliminate the ability for health plans to utilize prior authorization; and Senate Bill 247 does not apply to Medicaid Fee-For-Service or ERISA plans. What Senate Bill 247 does do, however, is reform the prior authorization process to ensure that it is transparent and timely, and that the doctor-patient relationship takes precedence over insurance company paperwork.

The original purpose of utilization management programs such as prior authorization was to screen for appropriateness of things like hospital admissions, high-cost procedures, and newer, high-cost specialty drugs where the risks and benefits are still being evaluated. But today, prior authorization has expanded to include common procedures and established generic products, causing unwarranted interruptions into medical decision-making by forcing physicians like myself, and other health care professionals, to jump through administrative hoops that often delay and impede appropriate treatment. Not only does this process add needless costs to the health care system, but even more troubling are the harmful impacts it has on patients resulting from delayed or abandoned treatment.

Senate Bill 247 provides a fix to this complicated issue by ensuring that the prior authorization process is based upon transparency and fairness, timeliness and efficiency, and clinical validity. The bill achieves these goals by requiring an insurer's prior authorization policies be easily understood and clearly posted on their website; that clinical review criteria is based on current, peer-reviewed evidence; that individuals with a financial stake in the outcome of prior authorization decisions are prohibited from making those decisions; that adverse determinations and appeals are made by a licensed physician; that clinicians and patients are properly notified of new or amended prior authorization requirements; and that prior authorization requests are reviewed in a more timely manner.

Some of you may have personally experienced prior authorization requirements. And, I imagine all of you remember countless personal stories shared by members of the Health Can't Wait Coalition and other constituents over the past three years about the unnecessary and devastating impacts of burdensome prior authorization requirements they, their family members, or their patients experienced.

Your support of these care-centered reforms included in Senate Bill 247 will better serve the patients that we see every day by allowing physicians and other health care professionals to make the best use of their time, training, and passion, which is caring for patients.

With your permission Chair Kahle, I would now like my colleague Doctor Nita Kulkarni to share her testimony. Doctor Kulkarni is a board certified Obstetrician & Gynecologist in the Genesee County area and also serves with me on the MSMS Board of Directors. Doctor Kulkarni...