

Thank you, Doctor Bozyk. 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. I do this on behalf of the women that come to me for care.

After many years of work in the medical community and with support from many on this committee, I am very happy to have the opportunity to share with you why reforming the prior authorization process is so vital to caring for the patients in my practice.

As an obstetrician / gynecologist, my passion is helping women navigate their health and wellbeing throughout their lives. My patients seek my help for conditions that range from the routine to life threatening emergencies. From abnormal uterine bleeding, to pelvic pain, to gynecologic cancers, patients trust that I will help alleviate their pain and suffering and improve their quality of life. My patient tells me her history, I do an exam, and we discuss her concerns. Often, we need confirmatory testing or a procedure to help her. This is when we hit the figurative wall. From simple tests like CT scans, to procedures in the operating room, my office staff has to get to work on getting permission to do what my patient and I know needs to be done. The waiting for prior authorization begins.

Just recently I had a patient that had been treated for breast cancer right before she went into menopause. Her periods had stopped at the time of treatment, only to return because of menopause. She just finished beating breast cancer and now was bleeding. We quickly found out she was bleeding due to a hormone imbalance. Her treatment required an injection to put her into menopause to stop the bleeding and more importantly stop the estrogen production that could make the cancer come back. The medication is called Lupron, has been around since 1985, and was denied through the prior authorization process by her insurance. Meanwhile my patient is bleeding and becoming anemic and, because of her cancer history, I can't give her hormones to stop it. It is maddening to have the tools to treat someone and not be able to get the treatment quickly. It is dejecting to watch my patients suffer physically and mentally under the weight of this bureaucracy.

My staff and I have spent countless hours filling out paperwork, clicking on websites endlessly, talking to random voices on the other end of the telephone, some of whom are contracted and incentivized to delay this care: the dreaded PBMs.

I will continue to fight until I can get this medication for my patient who is weak, anemic and recovering from cancer.

I and every physician in this state have many similar stories of the cost-control process known as prior authorization causing delays and sometimes even denying patients from accessing the diagnostic services, treatments, and medicines their physicians have prescribed. I know each and every one of you has experienced it as well.

Every day, prior authorization delays jeopardize the health and safety of countless patients throughout the state, each struggling more than they must in the fight to manage their own unique conditions and the suffering and anxiety that come along with them.

Thank you again for taking the time to hear my patients' stories and I'm happy, along with Doctor Bozyk, to answer any of your questions.