

Tuesday, April 11, 2017

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To the Oregon House Committee on Health Care:

I am an acupuncturist living and practicing in Portland, OR. The majority of my patients seek my help because they are suffering from chronic physical pain, and they want minimally invasive, non-surgical, non-pharmaceutical options for relieving that pain. I provide that service, as do many of my colleagues who are massage and physical therapists. Luckily, many patients have these services included in their health insurance plans as covered benefits. I think this is wonderful, and if anything, more healthcare plans ought to cover these services as a way to help Oregon deal with its opioid misuse and overdosing issues.

I am writing this letter to show my support of Oregon HB 2778. I think it is absolutely ridiculous that patients need to have their healthcare providers seek out preauthorization for benefits that are covered under their health insurance plan. Patients are not going to seek out healthcare that they don't need, and they don't keep coming in for treatment if the treatment isn't working.

Besides limiting patients' access to care that they're already paying premiums to have access to in the first place, preauthorizations and medical necessity requests take up valuable time from healthcare providers, who are already busy tending to their patients. If anything, this likely drives up the cost of healthcare further as providers still need to be reimbursed for their time. Shouldn't healthcare providers be spending their time working with their patients and not filling out forms that administrators require to protect their bottom line? Isn't the care of our patients the real bottom line?

Please pass OR HB 2778 and prohibit health insurers from forcing providers to acquire preapproval for services that health plans already guarantee as covered. Please take this small step toward making healthcare coverage slightly more logical and streamlined.

Thank you,
Alexander Kahn