

Testimony submitted via email.

Dear committee members,

I am writing to you as a healthcare provider and a constituent. I am an acupuncturist in Portland who sees many low-income patients with chronic pain. In the last year several major companies (MODA, PacificSource, FamilyCare), have begun to abuse the prior authorization system in a way that makes it incredibly difficult to provide care to my patients. The process goes like this:

1. patient calls and make an appointment with me. I find out that they are with a company that requires a PA for acupuncture
2. I print a PA form, fill it out, and fax it to the company
3. I see the patient
4. the company sends me a form asking me for more information, or for a referral from another provider (which they did not state that they needed in the beginning)
5. I see the patient again, having faxed in the required forms
6. the company informs me that they are denying the PA for an ever-changing list of reasons, and tells me that I will never be paid for seeing the patient
7. the patient is upset, as they have established care with me and are getting better, and now they need to start all over again with someone else. I am upset, firstly because I want to help the patient, and secondly because now I am out hundreds of dollars. I am not sure where to send the patient where they will not have the same exact problem.

I have been through this with so many patients now, and it is totally senseless. This process exists solely to deny patients access to care. If you want to stop the opiate epidemic in this state patients need effective pain care, and acupuncture is among the best ways to do that. Insurance companies don't like covering it because it costs more than pills, in the short term. Their motivation for not wanting to pay for it is clear, and they are currently being given carte blanche to stiff any provider that they want to.

I am small business owner. I cannot afford to spent hours of extra time per week faxing forms back and forth with insurance companies for no good reason. If they want to deny claims, that is their legal right. But it is also their legal responsibility to pay for the services that their plans cover, and they are abusing the PA system to weasel out of that responsibility. I understand that companies need to do a prior authorization before a surgery or other major procedure in order to make sure that everyone can get paid, but requiring one for every office visit is absurd.

Lastly, I want you to know that this is not only a problem for acupuncturists. I work in an office with several doctors, and now many companies are requiring a PA for every single prescription, including refills, and every single lab order. The amount of time and money that they are spending, again senselessly, filling out forms for services that are *explicitly covered* under the patient's plan is appalling.

In short, we need a fix for this problem immediately. If the legislature does not do something to fix this, our healthcare system in this state will fail to deliver care to patients and drive small clinics out of business. Please pass HB 2778.

Thank you for you time,

-Rowan Everard LAc

--



THE EQUI INSTITUTE

Patient Care Coordinator
APPOINTMENTS | QUESTIONS

4115 N. Mississippi Ave Portland, OR 97217
503-459-2584
503-719-8244
www.equi-institute.org