



Testimony in Support of House Bill 2517

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House Committee on Health Care

Deborah Riddick

Good afternoon Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Salinas and Hayden, and members of the committee. My name is Deborah Riddick. I am the Director of Government Relations for the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA). We represent 15,000 registered nurses and professional members, and the Nurse Practitioners of Oregon. The ONA supports HB 2517, which would require Oregon's coordinated care organizations to report specified information to Oregon Health Authority regarding requests for prior authorization.

Utilization management practices, such as prior authorization (PA) and step therapy (ST) are important tools to contain costs and ensure quality of care. However, they can often result in delayed treatment, abandonment of treatment and higher administrative burdens. PA is a process that requires physician offices to ask permission from a patient's insurance company before performing certain medical procedures or prescribing certain medications. ST protocols require patients to try and fail certain therapies before qualifying for others. HB 2517 seeks to ensure that utilization management protocols are fair, transparent, evidence-based, and best support the health needs of the patient. The key concerns addressed by HB 2517 are to prevent treatment delays and treatment abandonment.

HB 2517 would improve the efficiency of this process to support better patient outcomes, by:

- Allowing patients to maintain prescription drug coverage for 12 months. By eliminating the requirement to repeatedly seek PA for the same drug, there will be less disruption in the treatment process for the patient. In some cases, disruptions can result in significant loss of health or even life.
- Allowing patients to continue with treatments that have already been approved, for a reasonable and customary length of time not less than 90 days. Again, the PA process in this case can interrupt the treatment and result in loss of progress towards health.
- Continuing to require reimbursement for a prescription drug that is benefiting the patient, even if it is removed from the formulary after the end of an enrollment period.
- Creating a clear, accessible, and convenient process for the prescribing practitioner to request a step therapy exception and allowing a patient's ST history to follow them. This would spare patients the requirement of repeating step therapy or utilizing a step therapy that there is documented evidence will be harmful to a particular patient.

ONA supports HB 2517. We urge you to vote yes and move this important bill forward.

