

The Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act (H.R. 3173/S. 3018)

Health insurers, including Medicare Advantage (MA) plans, require patients to obtain prior authorization for certain medical treatments or tests before they are provided. Prior authorization is intended to ensure that patients receive clinically appropriate treatments and help control the cost of care but when misused can lead to delays in care and worse health outcomes.

Concerns with Prior Authorization

Often, prior authorization includes multiple calls between your doctor's office and the health insurer, faxing documents, and significant time that providers could otherwise be spending with patients.

- **13 percent** of denied prior authorization requests met Medicare's coverage rules and should not have been denied.
- **One in four** physicians report that prior authorization has led to a patient being hospitalized.
- Doctors spend an average of **13 hours a week** completing prior authorization paperwork.
- **88 percent** of doctors describe this burden of prior authorization as high or extremely high.

It's time to bring prior authorization into the 21st century by streamlining and standardizing the way plans use prior authorization to help improve care for seniors.

What Will the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act Do?

Representatives Suzan DelBene (WA-01), Mike Kelly (PA-16), Ami Bera (CA-07), and Larry Bucshon (IN-08) introduced the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act to improve care for seniors and increase oversight and transparency around prior authorization.

The bill would:

- Establish an electronic prior authorization process. No more faxing documents.
- Require HHS to establish a process for "real-time decisions" for items and services that are routinely approved.
- Improve transparency by requiring MA plans to report to CMS on their use of prior authorization and the rate of approvals or denials.
- Encourage plans to adopt prior authorization programs that adhere to evidence-based medical guidelines in consultation with physicians.

This commonsense, bipartisan reforms would make it easier for seniors to get care the care they need when they need it.

Overwhelming support

The bill has over 300 cosponsors in the U.S. House of Representatives and the endorsement of over 500 organizations.

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