

AACU is Against Prior Authorization Policies

Founded in 1968 by urologists concerned by the government's increasing role in the practice of medicine, the AACU is a professional organization representing the interests of more than 3,700+ member urologists, and urologic societies engaged as advocacy affiliates across the United States. We are dedicated to developing and advancing health policy education as it affects urologic practice in order to preserve and promote the professional autonomy of our members and support the highest quality of care for patients.

Prior authorization also known as prior approval or precertification is a process when a health plan decides whether a service, treatment plan, prescription drug or durable medical equipment is medically necessary. The plan may require prior authorization for certain services before a patient is able to receive them, except in emergency situations. Even with prior authorizations there is no guarantee that the plan will pay for the service at issue.

While plans may argue that prior authorization is a necessary tool for cost containment purposes, we at AACU feel that this policy is overutilized. Additionally, it presents the healthcare system with significant administrative and clinical concerns that are a barrier to patient care.

The American Medical Association recently reported on findings from a survey of 1,000 practicing physicians, including specialists, asking about their experiences with prior authorization.

More than nine in 10 doctors said prior authorization has a significant or somewhat negative impact on clinical outcomes. More than one-fourth (28%) said prior authorization has led to a serious adverse event such as a death, hospitalization, disability, or permanent bodily damage. Three-fourths of physicians said prior authorization can lead to treatment abandonment, and 91% indicated it results in care delays.

Nearly 90% of those surveyed report prior authorization burdens have increased significantly or somewhat in the last 5 years, and 86% claim the burden associated with prior authorization is high or extremely high in their practices. More than one in three physicians surveyed by the AMA have hired staff to work on prior authorizations.¹

AACU will continue to work with the urology community, the AMA and others to simplify healthcare, improve patient outcomes and lower costs. Prior authorization as used today is not the pathway to cost containment realization.

¹Urology Times; *Prior authorization takes its toll on urologists*, May 8, 2019
<https://www.urologytimes.com/view/prior-authorization-takes-its-toll-urologists>