**2020 AMA prior authorization (PA) physician survey**

**Care delays associated with PA**

Q: For those patients whose treatment requires PA, how often does this process delay access to necessary care?

- 15% Always
- 39% Often
- 40% Sometimes
- 4% Rarely
- 1% Never
- 1% Don't know

94% report care delays

**Abandoned treatment associated with PA**

Q: How often do issues related to the PA process lead to patients abandoning their recommended course of treatment?

- 21% Always
- 55% Often
- 18% Sometimes
- 4% Rarely
- 1% Never
- 1% Don't know

79% report that PA can at least sometimes lead to treatment abandonment

**PA and patient harm**

30% of physicians report that PA has led to a serious adverse event for a patient in their care.

- 21% of physicians report that PA has led to a patient’s hospitalization.
- 18% of physicians report that PA has led to a life-threatening event or required intervention to prevent permanent impairment or damage.
- 9% of physicians report that PA has led to a patient’s disability/permanent bodily damage, congenital anomaly/birth defect or death.

**Clinical validity of PA programs**

Q: How often are health plans’ PA criteria based on evidence-based medicine and/or guidelines from national medical specialty societies?

- 13% Always
- 42% Often
- 29% Sometimes
- 11% Rarely
- 3% Never
- 1% Don’t know

While 98% of health plans report they use peer-reviewed evidence-based studies when designing their PA programs, 32% of physicians report that PA criteria are rarely or never evidence-based.

**Impact of PA on clinical outcomes**

Q: For those patients whose treatment requires PA, what is your perception of the overall impact of this process on patient clinical outcomes?

- 9% Somewhat or significant negative impact
- 90% No impact
- 1% Somewhat or significant positive impact

Percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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Survey methodology

• Thirty-four question, web-based survey administered in December 2020
• Sample of 1000 practicing physicians drawn from M3 panel
• Forty percent (40%) primary care physicians/60% specialists
• Sample screened to ensure that all participating physicians:
   Are currently practicing in the United States
   Provide 20+ hours of patient care per week
   Complete PAs during a typical week of practice

References


Survey questions

A. Serious adverse event: In your experience, has the PA process ever affected care delivery and led to a serious adverse event (e.g., death, hospitalization, disability/permanent bodily damage, or other life-threatening event) for a patient in your care?
B. Number of PAs: Please provide your best estimate of the number of prescription and medical services PAs completed by you yourself and/or your staff for your patients in the last week. Do not include PAs that practice staff completed for the patients of other physicians in your practice.
C. Time to complete PAs: Thinking about all of the PAs you and your staff completed in the last week, please provide your best estimate of the number of hours spent on processing these PAs. Do not include PAs that practice staff completed for the patients of other physicians in your practice.
D. Practice resources for PA workload: Do you have staff members in your practice who work exclusively on PA?
E. Practice burden: How would you describe the burden associated with PA in your practice?

For information on the AMA’s PA advocacy efforts, visit ama-assn.org/prior-auth.