Whereas, The American Medical Association (AMA) has previously affirmed that physicians and physician practices should be fairly compensated for work involved in prior authorizations; and

Whereas, AMA CPT® Editorial Panel is authorized by the AMA Board of Trustees to revise, update, or modify CPT codes, descriptors, rules and guidelines; and

Whereas, Studies have shown that wrongful adverse determinations by health plans are common, including denial of prior authorization and denial of payment for previously provided services; and

Whereas, Costs involved in prior authorizations provide perverse disincentives and lead to suboptimal healthcare outcomes, especially for marginalized and economically vulnerable communities; and

Whereas, Good public and economic policy must align costs, benefits and incentives; currently, all costs are incurred by physician practices, and all financial savings and benefits from prior authorization accrue to health insurance plans leading to perverse incentives that disadvantage patients and endanger their health; and

Whereas, Compensation for work performed by physician practices is accomplished via CPT codes; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association include in any model legislation and as a basis for all advocacy, fair compensation based on CPT codes for appeal of wrongfully denied services, including those for prior authorization reforms and that CPT codes must fully reflect the aggregated time and effort expended by physician practices (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA evaluate and propose a CPT code for consideration by the CPT® Editorial Panel to account for administrative work involved in prior authorizations that reflects the actual time expended by physician practices to advocate on behalf of patients and to comply with insurer requirements (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA evaluate and propose a CPT code for consideration by the CPT® Editorial Panel to account for administrative work that reflects the actual time expended by physician practices and their billing vendors involved in successfully appealing wrongful pre-and post-service denials. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined
Received: 10/11/21
AUTHORS STATEMENT OF PRIORITY

The amount of time and effort physicians spend on administrative work rather than patient care continues to increase. Recognition of this burden and its contribution to physician burnout, career dissatisfaction, and patient dissatisfaction must be made. Repeated requests for documentation in order to pay denied claims, increased denial of claims, obtain pre-authorization for services continue to absorb more time in physician practices. These administrative tasks are not adequately compensated by the insurance industry. Physicians should not have to take time from patient care to deal with such matters. The AMA is the advocate for physicians in the United States and has a responsibility to address the issue of compensation for extensive administrative work. Appealing claim denials can drag on for months putting and additional burden on physician practices in terms of finances. Increased time spent on administrative work deserves compensation.

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

Prior Authorization and Utilization Management Reform H-320.939
1. Our AMA will continue its widespread prior authorization (PA) advocacy and outreach, including promotion and/or adoption of the Prior Authorization and Utilization Management Reform Principles, AMA model legislation, Prior Authorization Physician Survey and other PA research, and the AMA Prior Authorization Toolkit, which is aimed at reducing PA administrative burdens and improving patient access to care.
2. Our AMA will oppose health plan determinations on physician appeals based solely on medical coding and advocate for such decisions to be based on the direct review of a physician of the same medical specialty/subspecialty as the prescribing/ordering physician.
3. Our AMA supports efforts to track and quantify the impact of health plans’ prior authorization and utilization management processes on patient access to necessary care and patient clinical outcomes, including the extent to which these processes contribute to patient harm.
4. Our AMA will advocate for health plans to minimize the burden on patients, physicians, and medical centers when updates must be made to previously approved and/or pending prior authorization requests.

Remuneration for Physician Services H-385.951
1. Our AMA actively supports payment to physicians by contractors and third party payers for physician time and efforts in providing case management and supervisory services, including but not limited to coordination of care and office staff time spent to comply with third party payer protocols.
2. It is AMA policy that insurers pay physicians fair compensation for work associated with prior authorizations, including pre-certifications and prior notifications, that reflects the actual time expended by physicians to comply with insurer requirements and that compensates physicians fully for the legal risks inherent in such work.
3. Our AMA urges insurers to adhere to the AMA's Health Insurer Code of Conduct Principles including specifically that requirements imposed on physicians to obtain prior authorizations, including pre-certifications and prior notifications, must be minimized and streamlined and health insurers must maintain sufficient staff to respond promptly.


Citation: Sub. Res. 814, A-96; Reaffirmation A-02; Reaffirmation I-08; Reaffirmation I-09; Appended: Sub. Res. 126, A-10; Reaffirmed in lieu of Res. 719, A-11; Reaffirmed in lieu of Res.
Prior Authorization Reform D-320.982
Our AMA will explore emerging technologies to automate the prior authorization process for medical services and evaluate their efficiency and scalability, while advocating for reduction in the overall volume of prior authorization requirements to ensure timely access to medically necessary care for patients and reduce practice administrative burdens.
Citation: Res. 704, A-19