Patient impact

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

- 14% Always
- 42% Often
- 37% Sometimes
- 9% Rarely (6%)
- 0% Never
- 1% Don’t know

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

- 26% Always
- 52% Often
- 18% Sometimes
- 0% Rarely (6%)
- 0% Never
- 1% Don’t know

80% report that PA can at least sometimes lead to treatment abandonment.

PA and patient harm
33% of physicians report that PA has led to a serious adverse event for a patient in their care.

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?

- 14% Always
- 43% Often
- 27% Sometimes
- 11% Rarely
- 1% Never
- 1% Don’t know

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
- 89% No impact
- 2% Somewhat or significant positive impact

While 100% of health plans report they use peer-reviewed evidence-based studies when designing their PA programs, 31% of physicians report that PA criteria are rarely or never evidence-based.
Physician impact

On average, practices complete

45

PAs per physician, per week

(See below, Survey question “E”)

Physicians and their staff spend an average of

almost two business days (14 hours) each week completing PAs

(See below, Survey question “C”)

Nearly Two in five or

88%
of physicians describe the burden associated with PA as high or extremely high

(See below, Survey question “E”)

Is PA really a bargain?

Health plans insist that PA is needed to eliminate unnecessary treatment and keep health care affordable. However, physicians report that PA can lead to overall increased health care resource utilization and can negatively impact patients’ productivity at work. Which begs the question: is PA really a “bargain”?

PA and resource utilization

Q: In your experience, how often does the PA process lead to higher overall utilization of health care resources (e.g., additional office visits, initial use of less effective therapy due to step therapy requirements, emergency room visits, hospitalization)?

■ Sometimes, often, or always ■ Rarely or never ■ Don’t know

86% 12% 2%

64% of physicians report that PA has led to ineffective initial treatments (i.e., step therapy)

(See below, Survey question “B”)

62% of physicians report that PA has led to additional office visits

(See below, Survey question “C”)

46% of physicians report that PA has led to immediate care and/or ER visits

(See below, Survey question “D”)

Employer impact

58%
of physicians with patients in the workforce report that PA has impacted patient job performance

(See below, Survey question “E”)

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?

F. Employer impact: Consider your patients in the workforce. Has the PA process ever interfered with a patient’s ability to perform his/her job responsibilities?

Survey methodology

• Thirty-nine question, web-based survey administered in December 2022

• Sample of 1,001 practicing physicians drawn from M3 panel

• Forty percent 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

Reference


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