



PAIN TREATMENT CENTER
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Chairman Barta and Members of the Committee:

The physicians of The Pain Treatment Center Anesthesiologists are asking you to seriously consider supporting **2024 Senate Bill No 2280, Prior Authorization Legislation**. This bill will help to ensure healthcare can be provided to our patients and the citizens of North Dakota in the most cost effective and effective manner. The majority of the prior authorizations we perform are for imaging studies and interventional spinal injections and procedures. The volume of authorizations have increased significantly in the last few years as most all insurance payers have created their own set of requirements and limitations for many of these procedures. They have created individual processes that require access to their portals and completion of online questions and documentation uploads to determine if a procedure will be authorized. This process takes significant time and additional staff to complete and patient care can easily be compromised by having to wait several days at times for approval decisions to be made.

As a physician, it is both frustrating and discouraging to develop a treatment plan with a patient after evaluation to be told by an employee of an insurance company, someone that has not seen the patient, that our treatment plan is not authorized. Many times, we are informed the patient has not met the insurance guidelines or needs additional conservative treatments. In most cases, we have already considered this, and do not agree with the response but to challenge this process takes resources that we simply do not have. Many times, the insurance payers will offer a peer to peer phone call to discuss the denial. This takes physician time from the practice to discuss a treatment plan that we have clearly documented and is frustrating to be on a call with someone is usually unaware of the clinic indications for these specialty services. Although these calls can result in overturning the denial, they should not be necessary to begin with and take time away from the practice and our patients.

The American Medical Association has published comprehensive statistics related to care delays, cost, and the inefficiencies the prior authorization process has created within the healthcare system. The AMA statistics are real and part of our daily experience and The Pain Treatment Center Anesthesiologists, and we are submitting this testimony, and asking you to support this legislation to ensure appropriate controls are in place to manage the prior authorization process in North Dakota.

Respectfully,

Dustin Goetz MD

Attas Boutrous MD

Hugh Carlson MD