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Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council staff for Senator Klein
January 31, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

SENATE BILL NO. 2280

Introduced by

Senators Meyer, Barta, Bekkedahl, Cleary

Representatives Nelson, Warrey

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact chapter 26.1-36.12 of the North Dakota Century Code,
2 relating to prior authorization for health and dental insurance; and to provide for application.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 26.1-36.12 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted
5 as follows:

6 **26.1-36.12-01. Definitions.**

7 As used in this chapter:

8 1. "Adverse determination" means a decision by a prior authorization review organization
9 relating to an admission, extension of stay, or health care service that is partially or
10 wholly adverse to the enrollee, including a decision to deny an admission, extension of
11 stay, or health care service on the basis it is not medically necessary.

12 2. "Appeal" means a formal request, either orally or in writing, to reconsider an adverse
13 determination regarding an admission, extension of stay, or health care service.

14 3. "Authorization" means a determination by a prior authorization review organization that
15 a health care service has been reviewed and, based on the information provided,
16 satisfies the prior authorization review organization's requirements for medical
17 necessity and appropriateness, and payment will be made for that health care service.

18 4. "Clinical criteria" means the written policies, written screening procedures, drug
19 formularies or lists of covered drugs, determination rules, determination abstracts,
20 clinical protocols, practice guidelines, medical protocols, and any other criteria or

rationale used by the prior authorization review organization to determine the necessity and appropriateness of health care services.

5. "Emergency health care services" means health care services, supplies, or treatments furnished or required to screen, evaluate, and treat an emergency medical condition.

6. "Emergency medical condition" means a medical condition that manifests itself by symptoms of sufficient severity which may include pain and that a prudent layperson who possesses an average knowledge of health and medicine could reasonably expect the absence of medical attention to result in placing the individual's health in jeopardy, impairment of a bodily function, or dysfunction of any body part.

7. "Enrollee" means an individual who has contracted for or who participates in coverage under a policy for that individual or that individual's eligible dependents.

8. "Health care services" means health care procedures, treatments, or services provided by a licensed facility or provided by a licensed physician, licensed dentist, or within the scope of practice for which a health care professional is licensed. The term includes dental services and the provision of pharmaceutical products or services or durable medical equipment.

9. "Medically necessary" as the term applies to health care services means health care services a prudent physician or dentist would provide to a patient for the purpose of preventing, diagnosing, or treating an illness, injury, disease, or its symptoms in a manner that is:

   a. In accordance with generally accepted standards of medical practice;

   b. Clinically appropriate in terms of type, frequency, extent, site, and duration; and

   c. Not primarily for the economic benefit of the health plans and purchasers or for the convenience of the patient, treating physician, treating dentist, or other health care provider.

10. "Medication assisted treatment" means the use of medications, commonly in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a comprehensive approach to the treatment of substance use disorders. United States food and drug administration-approved medications used to treat opioid addiction include methadone and buprenorphine, alone or in combination with naloxone and extended-release

1 injectable naltrexone. Types of behavioral therapies include individual therapy, group
2 counseling, family behavior therapy, motivational incentives, and other modalities.
3 11. "Policy" means an insurance policy, a health maintenance organization contract, a
4 health service corporation contract, an employee welfare benefits plan, a hospital or
5 medical services plan, or any other benefits program providing payment,
6 reimbursement, or indemnification for health care costs. The term includes a dental
7 benefit plan as defined in section 26.1-36.9-01. The term does not include medical
8 assistance, benefits under title 65, or public employees retirement system health
9 benefitsself-funded health benefit plans subject to the federal Employee Retirement
10 Income Security Act of 1974.
11 12. "Prior authorization" means the review conducted before the delivery of a health care
12 service, including an outpatient health care service, to evaluate the necessity,
13 appropriateness, and efficacy of the use of health care services, procedures, and
14 facilities, by a person other than the attending health care professional, for the
15 purpose of determining the medical necessity of the health care services or admission.
16 The term includes a review conducted after the admission of the enrollee and in
17 situations in which the enrollee is unconscious or otherwise unable to provide advance
18 notification. The term does not include a referral or participation in a referral process
19 by a participating provider unless the provider is acting as a prior authorization review
20 organization.
21 13. "Prior authorization review organization" means a person that performs prior
22 authorization for:
23 a. An employer with employees in the state who are covered under a policy;
24 b. An insurer that writes policies;
25 c. A preferred provider organization or health maintenance organization; or
26 d. Any other person that provides, offers to provide, or administers hospital,
27 outpatient, medical, prescription drug, or other health benefits to an individual
28 treated by a health care professional in the state under a policy.
29 14. "Urgent health care service" means a health care service for which, in the opinion of a
30 health care professional with knowledge of the enrollee's medical condition, the
31 application of the time periods for making a non-expedited prior authorization might:

a. Jeopardize the life or health of the enrollee or the ability of the enrollee to regain maximum function; or

b. Subject the enrollee to pain that cannot be managed adequately without the care or treatment that is the subject of the prior authorization review.

26.1-36.12-02. Disclosure and review of prior authorization requirements.

1. A prior authorization review organization shall make any prior authorization requirements and restrictions readily accessible on the organization's website to enrollees, health care professionals, and the general public. Requirements include the written clinical criteria and be described in detail using plain and ordinary language comprehensible by a layperson.

2. If a prior authorization review organization intends to implement a new prior authorization requirement or restriction, or amend an existing requirement or restriction, the prior authorization review organization shall:

a. Ensure the new or amended requirement is not implemented unless the prior authorization review organization's website has been updated to reflect the new or amended requirement or restriction; and

b. Provide contracted health care providers of enrollees written notice of the new or amended requirement or amendment no fewer than one hundred twenty days before the requirement or restriction is implemented.

3. This section may not be construed to prohibit a prior authorization review organization from amending existing prior authorization requirements to the benefit of an enrollee earlier than one hundred twenty days before the new amendment is implemented.

4. This section does not prohibit a prior authorization review organization from implementing a prior authorization requirement or restriction that aligns with medical guidelines and clinical criteria.

~~**26.1-36.12-03. Personnel qualified to make adverse determinations.**~~

~~A prior authorization review organization shall ensure all adverse determinations are made by a licensed physician or licensed dentist. The reviewing individual:~~

~~1. Shall posses a valid nonrestricted license to practice medicine or dentistry;~~

~~2. Must be of the same or similar specialty as the physician or dentist who typically manages the condition or illness or provides the health care service involved in the request;~~

~~3. Must have experience treating patients with the condition or illness for which the health care service is being requested; and~~

~~4. Shall make the adverse determination under the clinical direction of one of the prior authorization review organization's medical directors who is responsible for the health care services provided to enrollees.~~

~~26.1-36.12-04~~26.1-36.12-03. Consultation before issuing an adverse determination.

If a prior authorization review organization is questioning the medical necessity of a health care service, the prior authorization review organization shall notify the enrollee's physician or dentist that medical necessity is being questioned. Before issuing an adverse determination, the prior authorization review organization shall allow the enrollee's physician or dentist, or other health care personnel, the opportunity to discuss the medical necessity of the health care service on the telephone with the physician or dentist who will be responsible for determining authorization of the health care service under review.

~~26.1-36.12-05~~26.1-36.12-04. Personnel qualified to review appeals.

1. A prior authorization review organization shall ensure all appeals are reviewed by a physician or dentist. The reviewing individual:

   a. Shall possess a valid nonrestricted license to practice medicine or dentistry;

   b. Must be ~~in active practice in~~of the same or similar specialty as the physician or dentist who typically manages the medical condition or disease ~~for at least five consecutive years~~;

   c. Must be knowledgeable of, and have experience providing, the health care services under appeal;

   d. May not be employed by a prior authorization review organization or be under contract with a prior authorization review organization other than to participate in one or more of the prior authorization review organization's health care provider networks or to perform reviews of appeals~~, or otherwise have any financial interest in the outcome of the appeal~~;

   e. May not have been directly involved in making the adverse determination; and

f. Shall consider all known clinical aspects of the health care service under review, including a review of all pertinent medical records provided to the prior authorization review organization by the enrollee's health care provider, any relevant records provided to the prior authorization review organization by a health care facility, and any medical literature provided to the prior authorization review organization by the health care provider.

2. A review of an adverse determination involving a prescription drug must be conducted by a licensed pharmacist or physician who is competent to evaluate the specific clinical issues presented in the review.

~~26.1-36.12-06~~26.1-36.12-05. Prior authorization - Nonurgent circumstances.

1. If a prior authorization review organization requires prior authorization of a health care service, the prior authorization review organization shall make a prior authorization or adverse determination and notify the enrollee and the enrollee's health care provider of the decision within ~~two~~five business days of obtaining all necessary information to make the decision. For purposes of this subsection, "necessary information" includes the results of any face-to-face clinical evaluation or second opinion that may be required.

2. A prior authorization review organization shall allow an enrollee and the enrollee's health care provider fourteen business days following a nonurgent circumstance or provision of health care services for the enrollee or health care provider to notify the prior authorization review organization of the nonurgent circumstance or provision of health care services.

~~26.1-36.12-07~~26.1-36.12-06. Prior authorization - Urgent health care services.

A prior authorization review organization shall render a prior authorization or adverse determination concerning urgent health care services and notify the enrollee and the enrollee's health care provider of that prior authorization or adverse determination within ~~twenty-four hours~~three business days after receiving all information needed to complete the review of the requested health care services.

1 ~~26.1-36.12-08~~26.1-36.12-07. **Prior authorization - Emergency medical condition.**
2 1. A prior authorization review organization may not require prior authorization ~~for~~
3 ~~prehospital transportation or~~ for the provision of emergency health care services for an
4 emergency medical condition.
5 2. A prior authorization review organization shall allow an enrollee and the enrollee's
6 health care provider a minimum of two business days following an emergency
7 admission or provision of emergency health care services for an emergency medical
8 condition for the enrollee or health care provider to notify the prior authorization review
9 organization of the admission or provision of health care services.
10 3. A prior authorization review organization shall cover emergency health care services
11 for an emergency medical condition necessary to screen and stabilize an enrollee. ~~If,~~
12 ~~within seventy-two hours of an enrollee's admission, a health care provider certifies in~~
13 ~~writing to a prior authorization review organization that the enrollee's condition~~
14 ~~required emergency health care services for an emergency medical condition, that~~
15 ~~certification will create a presumption the emergency health care services for the~~
16 ~~emergency medical condition were medically necessary. The presumption may be~~
17 ~~rebutted only if the prior authorization review organization can establish, with clear and~~
18 ~~convincing evidence, that the emergency health care services for the emergency~~
19 ~~medical condition were not medically necessary.~~
20 4. The medical necessity or appropriateness of emergency health care services for an
21 emergency medical condition may not be based on whether those services were
22 provided by participating or nonparticipating providers. ~~Restrictions on coverage of~~
23 ~~emergency health care services for an emergency medical condition provided by~~
24 ~~nonparticipating providers may not be greater than restrictions that apply when those~~
25 ~~services are provided by participating providers.~~
26 5. If an enrollee receives an emergency health care service that requires immediate
27 post-evaluation or post-stabilization services, a prior authorization review organization
28 shall make an authorization determination within two business days of receiving a
29 request. If the authorization determination is not made within ~~two~~three business days,
30 the services must be deemed approved.

~~26.1-36.12-09~~26.1-36.12-08. No prior authorization for medication assisted treatment.

A prior authorization review organization may not require prior authorization for the provision of medication assisted treatment for the treatment of opioid use disorder.

~~26.1-36.12-10~~26.1-36.12-09. Retrospective denial.

A prior authorization review organization may not revoke, limit, condition, or restrict a prior authorization if care is provided, as specified within the prior authorization request, within forty-five business days from the date the health care provider received the prior authorization unless there is evidence the prior authorization was based on fraud, misinformation, or a previously approved prior authorization conflicts with state or federal law.

~~26.1-36.12-11~~26.1-36.12-10. Length of prior authorization.

A prior authorization is valid for six months after the date the health care provider receives the prior authorization. This section does not limit a prior authorization review organization's ability to evaluate clinical criteria and medical guidelines during the six-month period. If clinical or medical guidelines change during the six-month period, the prior authorization review organization may adjust the prior authorized service.

~~26.1-36.12-12~~26.1-36.12-11. Chronic or long-term care conditions.

If a prior authorization review organization requires a prior authorization for a health care service for the treatment of a chronic or long-term care condition, the prior authorization remains valid for twelve months. This section does not limit a prior authorization review organization's ability to evaluate clinical criteria and medical guidelines during the twelve-month period. If clinical or medical guidelines change during the twelve-month period, the prior authorization review organization may adjust the prior authorized service.

~~26.1-36.12-13~~26.1-36.12-12. Continuity of care for enrollees.

1. On receipt of information documenting a prior authorization from the enrollee or from the enrollee's health care provider, unless a change in clinical or medical guidelines would negatively affect an enrollee, a prior authorization review organization shall honor a prior authorization granted to an enrollee from a previous prior authorization review organization for at least the initial sixty days of an enrollee's coverage under a new policy.
2. During the time period described in subsection 1, a prior authorization review organization may perform its review to grant a prior authorization.

1 3. If there is a change in coverage of, or approval criteria for, a previously authorized
2 health care service, the change in coverage or approval criteria does not affect an
3 enrollee who received prior authorization before the effective date of the change for
4 the remainder of the enrollee's plan year. This subsection does not apply if a prior
5 authorization review organization changes coverage terms for a drug or device:
6 a. That has been deemed unsafe by the United States food and drug
7 administration;
8 b. That has been withdrawn by the United States food and drug administration or
9 the product manufacturer; or
10 c. After an independent source of research, clinical guidelines, or evidence-based
11 standards issued drug-specific or device-specific warnings or recommendations
12 changing the drug or device usage.
13 4. A prior authorization review organization shall continue to honor a prior authorization
14 the organization has granted to an enrollee if the enrollee changes products under the
15 same health insurance company.
16 **~~26.1-36.12-14. Failure to comply - Services deemed authorized.~~**
17 ~~If a prior authorization review organization fails to comply with the deadlines and other~~
18 ~~requirements in this chapter, any health care services subject to review automatically are~~
19 ~~deemed authorized by the prior authorization review organization.~~
20 **~~26.1-36.12-15~~26.1-36.12-13. Procedures for appeals of adverse determinations.**
21 1. A prior authorization review organization shall have written procedures for appeals of
22 adverse determinations. The right to appeal must be available to the enrollee and the
23 attending health care professional.
24 2. The enrollee may review the information relied on in the course of the appeal, present
25 evidence and testimony as part of the appeals process, and receive continued
26 coverage pending the outcome of the appeals process.
27 **~~26.1-36.12-16~~26.1-36.12-14. Effect of change in prior authorization clinical criteria.**
28 1. If, during a plan year, a prior authorization review organization changes coverage
29 terms for a health care service or the clinical criteria used to conduct prior
30 authorizations for a health care service, the change in coverage terms or in clinical
31 criteria does not apply until the next plan year for any enrollee who received prior

authorization for a health care service using the coverage terms or clinical criteria in effect before the effective date of the change. This subsection does not apply if a prior authorization review organization changes coverage terms for a drug or device:

a. That has been deemed unsafe by the United States food and drug administration;

b. That has been withdrawn by the United States food and drug administration or the product manufacturer; or

c. After an independent source of research, clinical guidelines, or evidence-based standards issued drug-specific or device-specific warnings or recommendations changing the drug or device usage.

2. This section may not be construed to limit a prior authorization review organization's ability to implement prior authorization standards or restrictions before the next plan year which reflect updated medical and clinical guidelines that if not implemented would jeopardize the health of an enrollee.

26.1-36.12-17 26.1-36.12-15. Notification to claims administrator.

If the prior authorization review organization and the claims administrator are separate entities, the prior authorization review organization shall notify, either electronically or in writing, the appropriate claims administrator for the health benefit plan of any adverse determination that is reversed on appeal.

26.1-36.12-18 26.1-36.12-16. Annual report to insurance commissioner.

1. A prior authorization review organization shall report to the insurance commissioner by September first of each year, in a form and manner specified by the commissioner, information regarding prior authorization requests for the previous calendar year.

2. The report must include the:

   a. Total number of prior authorization requests received;

   b. Number of prior authorization requests for which an authorization was issued;

   c. Number of prior authorization requests for which an adverse determination was issued;

   d. Number of adverse determinations reversed on appeal; and

   e. Reasons an adverse determination was issued, expressed as a percentage of all adverse determinations. The reasons, which may include:

1 (1) The patient did not meet prior authorization criteria;
2 (2) Incomplete information was submitted by the provider to the prior
3 authorization review organization;
4 (3) The treatment program changed; or
5 (4) The patient is no longer covered by the health benefit plan.;
6 f. Number of prior authorization requests submitted but not necessary;
7 g. Number of prior authorization requests submitted by electronic means; and
8 h. Number of prior authorization requests submitted by non-electronic means,
9 including mail and facsimile.
10 **SECTION 2. APPLICATION.** This Act applies to health benefit plans offered or purchased
11 after January 1, 2026.