



Administrative Burden reform

Act 146 of 2022, supported by the PAFP, represents the Commonwealth's most meaningful health insurance reform measure in more than two decades. While this was a crucial step toward bringing transparency and consistency to the prior authorization process, there is still work to be done to ensure timely patient care. Other administrative hurdles, such as credentialing processes imposed on physicians by health insurance providers, take physician time away from patients, delaying access to quality health care. The PAFP supports legislation that would streamline health insurer credentialing processes and address other administrative hurdles to ensure timelier patient care.

Scope of Practice Expansion

Health care providers, such as Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners (CRNPs) and Physician Assistants (PAs), are integral, valuable members of the health care team, held in the highest regard by family physicians. However, patients are best served when a physician-led, highly coordinated team provides care. During the 2021-22 session, the PAFP supported legislation allowing pharmacists to administer influenza and COVID vaccinations to children ages 5 and above; however, medications, biologics, routine childhood immunizations, and diagnostic tests should be prescribed and administered by a member of the patient's physician-led health care team to ensure proper diagnosis and treatment. The PAFP opposes legislation that would expand non-physician providers' scope of practice beyond their education and training, eliminate collaborative agreements with physicians, and allow pharmacists to conduct diagnostic testing and administer routine childhood immunizations.

Family Physician Workforce Development

The PAFP, through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, administers the Family Medicine Residency Expansion program, which seeks to generate family physician residency graduates for the state's primary care workforce. As part of the 2022-23 fiscal year budget, the program received an increase to further expand its impact on communities across the Commonwealth. A PAFP-supported study in 2021 by the Joint State Government Committee on the efforts of Pennsylvania's medical schools to promote family medicine called for greater investment in and expansion of the state's existing primary care pipeline programs, which aligns with the PAFP's work to advance the specialty of family medicine within the Commonwealth. The PAFP further supports policies, such as eliminating non-compete clauses in physician employment contracts, that would help expand the Commonwealth's primary care physician workforce and increase access to family physicians for all Pennsylvanians.

Telemedicine Services and Reimbursement

Telemedicine has become an increasingly common form of health care, especially given the recent COVID-19 pandemic; however, reimbursement rates for telemedicine services continue to fall short of those for in-person health care visits. The PAFP supports legislation enabling parity with in-person visits in the service of and payment for telehealth care. Specifically, the PAFP encourages the inclusion of the following provisions in any telemedicine policy: requires scope of practice and payment parity for all telehealth services on par with in-person office visits; requires reimbursement for telehealth audio-only visits at parity with in-person office visits; ensures that primary care telehealth services be conducted within the context of an existing, comprehensive primary care relationship; does not contain carve outs for the prescription of certain medications or treatment, including buprenorphine and opioids; permits interstate licensing for the practice of telemedicine; and standardizes home and work settings as eligible

sites of service across all insurance providers to decrease regulatory burden of all telehealth services and provide high quality, safe and timely patient care.

Access to Health Care for all Pennsylvanians

The PAFP recognizes the varying personal, religious, and moral beliefs of our members and the scope of health care services they choose to provide. The PAFP supports the evidence-based practice of medicine and access to safe, medically-sound health care services, including reproductive and maternity health services, for all Pennsylvanians. Additionally, the PAFP opposes the criminalization of evidence-based medicine; government infringement on the confidential relationship between physicians and their patients; legislation that regulates the content or scope of information exchanged between a patient and physician; and legislative limitations on patient autonomy in making decisions about their health care.

Prescribing and Treatment Mandates for Opioid Use Disorder

Given the ongoing opioid crisis in Pennsylvania, access to care for patients suffering from substance use disorder is more critical than ever. State regulations that would place additional barriers on providers already federally approved to prescribe buprenorphine for Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder could jeopardize patient access to office-based opioid treatment. The PAFP opposes legislation that would create additional hurdles at the state level for prescribers of buprenorphine and other MAT options who have already been approved to prescribe such medications by the federal Drug Enforcement Agency.

Primary Care Spending and Alternative Health Care Payment Models

Evidence shows that high quality, accessible primary care helps keep populations healthier longer and lowers the overall costs of health care. Yet, Pennsylvania lags behind other states in investing in primary care services. The PAFP supports measures that prioritize shifting more health care dollars to primary care, strengthening the Commonwealth's health care infrastructure. Additionally, the PAFP supports alternative health care practice and payment models, such as Direct primary care (DPC) and value-based payment, to increase access to quality, affordable primary health care and improve population health.

Prescription Drug Costs and Transparency

The PAFP supports legislation that would ensure the availability of effective, safe, and affordable medications through governmental authority to promote competition and availability, transparency, patient-centric pricing, drug price negotiation and review.

Public Health and Health in All Policies

The PAFP supports legislation and policies that would help ensure the increased health, safety, and quality of life of all Pennsylvanians through collaboration with state agencies, the Pennsylvania General Assembly, and the Administration. Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a collaborative approach that integrates health considerations into policymaking across state government to improve the health of all communities and people. The PAFP supports the adoption of a HiAP strategy to help address social determinants of health and health disparities and assist the Commonwealth in developing the most effective and achievable means for improving the health and well-being of all Pennsylvanians.

PAFP's State Legislative Agenda is crafted through the Government and Practice Advocacy Committee with position decisions made by the Board of Directors.