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PAFP applauds legislative action on prior authorization, thanks governor

(HARRISBURG, PA. Nov 5, 2022) Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP) President Jason Woloski, MD, FAAFP, today, thanked the Pennsylvania General Assembly and Gov. Tom Wolf for passing the most meaningful health insurance reform measure in more than 20 years, addressing prior authorizations.

“The administrative burden of prior authorization confronts physicians and patients on a daily basis, and this is a step toward quicker decisions and revised complaint systems,” Dr. Woloski said. “With the passage of Senate Bill 225, we can return the focus of the practice of medicine to patient care without sacrificing the affordability of or access to commercial health insurance. It will improve the Commonwealth’s Medicaid and CHIP managed care programs as well.

“Political divisiveness gets a lot of attention in Harrisburg, but here is a case of a true bi-partisan effort to better the lives of Pennsylvanians. We thank the members of the Pennsylvania House and Senate for their steadfast commitment to addressing this issue; we especially thank the bill’s sponsor, Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-York), who has been an inimitable champion for patients and physicians throughout the negotiation process.

“We thank Gov. Tom Wolf for signing the measure into law this week to become Act 146 of 2022,” Dr. Woloski concluded.

While prior authorization reform is an important step toward increasing patient access and minimizing administrative burdens for physicians, there is still more to be done to improve Pennsylvania’s health care infrastructure, including eliminating restrictive covenants in health care provider contracts, addressing venue shopping in medical liability cases, and ensuring that physicians remain team leaders in the delivery of primary care.

Among other provisions, Act 146 will:

- Create consistent turnaround times for making prior authorization decisions – not more than 15 days for non-urgent medical services;
- Clearly define and waive prior authorization for “closely related services;”

- Waive prior authorization for some Medically Assisted Treatments (MAT) for opioid use disorder (OUD);
- Require review by or consultation with a licensed medical professional in a same or similar specialty before denial of a prior authorization request;
- Require insurers to establish a provider portal that includes electronic submission of prior authorization requests, access to applicable medical policies, and other relevant information; and
- Provide a clearer route to request an override from the step therapy process.

A comprehensive summary of the bill can be found [here](#).

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The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians and its Foundation is a physician-led organization committed to advancing quality healthcare through advocacy, education, workforce development and commitment to the patients we serve. For over 70 years and with over 6,000 physician, resident and student members, the Academy and its Foundation's core values are visionary leadership, integrity, and community.