

Patrick Connolly
Maine Academy of Family Physicians
LD 1496

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and honorable committee members, my name is Dr. Patrick Connolly. I live in Falmouth, and I am in support of LD 1496, An Act to Ensure Ongoing Access to Medications and Care for Chronic Conditions and Conditions Requiring Long-term Care by Changing Requirements for Prior Authorizations.

As a family doctor in practice in Portland for the past 30 years, I have seen my patients and my practice suffer from the increasingly onerous demands of insurance companies. It is simply unconscionable that patients be forced to justify their need to take life saving medicines, especially when they have been on them chronically. Patients who are stable on their chronic meds risk their health when prior authorizations delay or deny treatment. Too frequently, patients will stop taking medicine altogether when a prior auth requirement deters them from getting their medicine. Treatment delayed is treatment denied, and my patients suffer.

The prior authorization places undue burdens on primary care offices like mine. We have one staffer whose full time job is to process prior authorizations for patients. This is a completely unfunded mandate that insurance companies impose upon us. It is also a cause of burnout and stress which contributes to the shortage of primary care in Maine.

Personally, I would like to see prior authorizations go away entirely. LD 1496 is a very reasonable approach to remove unnecessary barriers to good care.

I urge the Committee to vote ought to pass