

MaineHealth

MaineHealth Local Health Systems

Franklin Community
Health Network
LincolnHealth
MaineHealth Care At Home
Maine Behavioral Healthcare
Memorial Hospital
Maine Medical Center
Mid Coast-Parkview Health
NorDx
Pen Bay Medical Center
Southern Maine Health Care
Synernet
Waldo County General Hospital
Western Maine Health

Part of the MaineHealth Family

MaineHealth Accountable
Care Organization

MaineHealth Affiliates

MaineGeneral Health
New England Rehabilitation
Hospital of Portland
St. Mary's Health System

Testimony of Sarah Calder, MaineHealth

In Support of

LD 523 & 617

“An Act Regarding Prior Authorizations for Prescription Drugs”

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Sarah Calder, Director of Government Affairs at MaineHealth, and I am here to testify in support of LD 523 and LD 617, “An Act Regarding Prior Authorizations for Prescription Drugs.”

MaineHealth is Maine’s largest integrated non-profit health care system that provides the full continuum of health care services to the residents of eleven counties in Maine and one in New Hampshire. As part of our commitment to meeting our vision of “working together so our communities are the healthiest in America,” MaineHealth’s providers work hard every day to provide high quality, efficient care to our patients, and we are proud that all of MaineHealth’s eligible hospitals recently received an A Safety Rating from the Leapfrog Group.

Prior authorizations (PA) place a significant and expensive burden on practices. The Maine Medical Association recently surveyed providers, and a full 85% indicated that there was a high administrative burden associated with seeking PAs. Many practices have ten or more cases per week that require PAs, and 62% stated that they spend between 2-10 hours on them, and another 20% spend more than 10 hours per week seeking PAs. This represents a very expensive administrative cost to the health care system, a factor in physician burnout, one that does not support evidence-based medicine.

Every day, prescribers throughout the MaineHealth system struggle with PAs for inhalers, some insulins, proton pump inhibitors, and other common medications. It is important to note that this administrative burden has a real impact on the patients we are trying to care for – and only delays their treatment and access to lifesaving medicine.

The legislation before you today requires all carriers to adopt real time electronic transmission to ensure providers have the timely information they need to make insurance carrier medical necessity decisions and to have a process supported by the insurance company that is efficient to the provider and ultimately allows for more timely patient care. However, like Northern Light Health, we would urge the Committee amend the legislation and remove “at least one” from the bill and encourage carriers to integrate with all of the provider platforms.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.