



March 2, 2021

Representative Andrea Salinas  
Chair, House Committee on Health Care  
Oregon State Legislature  
Salem, OR 97301

Honorable Chair Salinas and Members of the House Committee,

The Oregon Society of Medical Oncology (OSMO) and the Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) are pleased to **support HB 2517: Requires coordinated care organizations to report specified information to Oregon Health Authority regarding requests for prior authorization.**

OSMO's goal is to promote the highest professional standards of oncology in the state of Oregon and to study, research and exchange information, experiences and ideas leading to improvement in the field. ASCO is the world's leading professional society representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With nearly 45,000 members, our core mission is to ensure that cancer patients have meaningful access to high quality cancer care.

**OSMO and ASCO are committed to supporting policies that reduce cost while preserving quality of cancer care; however, it is critical that such policies be developed and implemented in a way that does not undermine patient access.** A number of utilization management approaches used by payers are of particular concern because they may represent greater likelihood of raising barriers to appropriate care for individuals with cancer. ASCO policy suggests that payers can mitigate these barriers to care by:

1. limiting the focus of prior authorization requirements to specific areas of concern; and
2. providing an efficient, transparent prior authorization process within a reasonable timeline.

To that end, our affiliate, the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) joined the American Medical Association and 16 other healthcare organizations in 2017 to establish [Prior Authorization and Utilization Management Reform Principles](#) urging health plans, benefit managers and others to reform utilization management programs. With these principles in mind, **we are pleased to see that HB 2517:**

- **Enhances clinical validity** by requiring insurers to cite evidence-based, peer-reviewed literature in their written rationale for any prior authorization denial;
- **Promotes continuity of care** by requiring 12 months of continued prescription drug coverage and 90 days of continued health service coverage after prior authorization is approved;
- **Improves transparency** by implementing insurer reporting requirements and ensuring that utilization management processes are posted clearly online; **and**
- **Ensures timely access to care** by determining that a prior authorization request must be answered within two business days under normal circumstances and within one day if the request is urgent.

In addition to the improvements that HB 2517 makes to Oregon prior authorization procedures, **we are pleased to see that the measure also addresses issues arising from fail first/step therapy protocols by:**

- **Providing a clear and transparent process to request an exemption** for medications submitted for step therapy review; and

- **Establishing a concise time frame** of 72 hours for review of patient and provider requests and 24 hours for urgent requests.

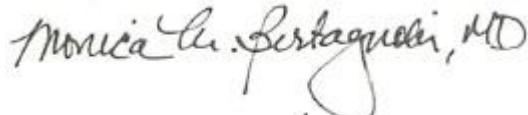
Step therapy or fail first policies can be problematic for patients with cancer because they can severely delay a patient's access to the best treatment available for their condition. While many treatments preferred by payers are less costly financially, they may not be the best treatment available for the patient. While waiting to complete a "step," a patient with cancer may experience disease progression and irreversible damage to their overall health.

OSMO and ASCO are encouraged by the steps that HB 2517 takes toward improving prior authorization and step therapy procedures in Oregon and welcome the opportunity to be a resource for you. For a more detailed understanding of our policy recommendations on this issue, we invite you to read the [ASCO Position Statement: Utilization Management](#). Please contact Allison Rollins at ASCO at [allison.rollins@asco.org](mailto:allison.rollins@asco.org) or Dr. David Hufnagel from OSMO at [dhufnagel@samhealth.org](mailto:dhufnagel@samhealth.org) if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



David Hufnagel, DO  
President  
Oregon Society of Medical Oncology



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