

Submitter: Mariah Frank
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3134

I am writing to advocate for the passage of a bill that would allow patients to receive up to 16 visits of physical therapy without the need for prior authorization. As a healthcare provider, I have seen firsthand the detrimental effects that delays in care due to prior authorization can have on patients' health and well-being.

One specific case that illustrates the harmful consequences of this process involved a patient of mine who was suffering from severe joint pain. Due to the nature of her condition, she urgently needed physical therapy to manage pain and prevent further deterioration. However, the prior authorization process took 30 days to complete. During this time, we were forced to cancel her appointments, awaiting approval. Ultimately, the authorization request was denied.

As a result, the patient experienced a prolonged wait of 30 days for care. In addition, when we were finally able to reschedule her therapy, she had to endure even more delays in receiving care at a different clinic. This extended period without treatment not only exacerbated her pain, but it also severely limited her ability to perform activities of daily living (ADLs). For a patient dealing with joint pain, these limitations can lead to a decreased quality of life and increased emotional distress.

Moreover, the lack of movement and therapy over four weeks can contribute to muscle atrophy and further functional decline, which often leads to the need for more intensive and costly interventions, such as surgery. This cycle of delays and escalating medical needs puts both the patient and the healthcare system under significant strain, ultimately increasing the cost of care and further burdening individuals and taxpayers alike.

Allowing for 16 visits of physical therapy before requiring prior authorization would not only expedite access to care but also prevent the unnecessary complications, costs, and delays associated with the current system. It is crucial that we prioritize patients' ability to receive timely, effective care, particularly when early intervention can prevent more serious, costly health issues down the line.

Thank you for considering this important issue. I strongly urge you to support this bill and help ensure that all Oregonians have access to the care they need when they need it.

Sincerely,

Mariah Frank, PT, DPT, PRPC