



**RHODE ISLAND ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS**
STRONG MEDICINE FOR RHODE ISLAND

Honorable Chair Donovan of the
House Committee on Health & Human Services
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H7623: RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE RHODE ISLAND
HEALTH CARE REFORM ACT OF 2004 -- HEALTH INSURANCE OVERSIGHT

February 28, 2024

Dear Chair Donovan and Members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

I write to you on behalf of the Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians (RIAFP) **in strong support of H7623.**

As family physicians, we take care of people of all ages and genders. We manage routine preventative care, chronic illness, and acute illness and injury. As primary care doctors we are often the first point of entry to the medical system and, in theory, the person who follows patients over a lifetime. But that is changing, because **physicians are retiring early and leaving primary care in droves because of burnout and moral injury, much of which is driven by increasing administrative burden.**

Prior Authorizations (PAs) for medications have become an enormous source of administrative burden for primary care providers. A recent survey by the American Medical Association (AMA) reported that on average practices process **45 prior authorizations per provider per week** and that **practices spend the equivalent of two full business days processing prior authorizations.** A small Rhode Island Federally Qualified Health Center has recently had to hire two full time nurses to be able to manage the prior authorizations for just ten full time primary care providers. **Can you imagine how much better we could be using our healthcare resources?**

The above-mentioned AMA survey also noted that 89% of respondents reported significant negative impacts on clinical care due to PAs and 33% of providers reported that PAs led to serious adverse events for patients in their care.

The increasing administrative burden associated with PA is causing physicians to spend less time seeing patients and more time doing paperwork. It is also undermining physician clinical decision making and leading to delays in care. This makes physicians feel resentful and frustrated and is making more and more physicians want to leave clinical medicine entirely.

The creation of the OHIC Administrative Simplification Task Force represented an important step forward and has helped to facilitate meaningful dialogue between insurers and providers. However, the need for meaningful reform is imperative and urgent and this legislation would move this work forward. So I ask you, **if you do not want to see the primary care workforce dwindle further, let's take this issue seriously and pass H7623 so that we can bring about meaningful prior authorization reform.**

Sincerely,

Katharina de Klerk, DO
RIAFP Advocacy Committee Chair