



February 5, 2024

Representative Brian Lohse
Representative Shannon Lundgren
Representative Megan Srinivas
Iowa State Capitol
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Representatives Lohse, Lundgren, and Srinivas,

The Iowa Oncology Society (IOS) and the Association for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) are pleased to strongly support H.S.B. 641, a bill that establishes guardrails around prior authorization processes in the state.

IOS is a community of oncologists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and other allied health professionals who provide a powerful voice for multidisciplinary cancer care teams and the patients they serve. ASCO is a national organization representing physicians who care for people with cancer. With nearly 50,000 members, our core mission is to ensure that cancer patients have meaningful access to high quality, equitable cancer care.

Prior authorization requires patients or their providers to secure pre-approval as a condition of payment or insurance coverage of services. In a recent ASCO survey, 80% of respondents said that a patient has experienced significant impacts on their health, such as disease progress, because of prior authorization processes. The most common harms to patients include delays in treatment (95%) and diagnostic imaging (94%), patients being forced onto second-choice therapy (93%) or denied therapy (87%) and increased out-of-pocket costs (88%). These survey results confirm that prior authorization results in unnecessary delays or denials of cancer care.

IOS 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. Payer utilization management approaches like prior authorization are of particular concern because they represent greater likelihood of raising barriers to appropriate care for individuals with cancer.

IOS and ASCO are pleased that H.S.B. 641 ensures timely access to care by requiring insurers to respond to a prior authorization request within 10 calendar days for nonurgent circumstances and within 48 hours if the request is urgent. H.S.B. 641 would also require insurers to develop a pilot program that would offer some providers an exemption from certain prior authorization requirements. This will allow doctors to skip the burdensome prior authorization process, ultimately resulting in more-timely delivery of care to patients.

IOS and ASCO are encouraged by the steps H.S.B. 641 takes toward improving prior authorization in Iowa, and we urge you to support the measure. We 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: Prior Authorization](#). Please contact Sarah Lanford at ASCO at Sarah.Lanford@asco.org if you have any questions or if we can be of

Sincerely,

Susannah P. Friemel, MD
President
Iowa Oncology Society

Everett E. Vokes, MD, FASCO
Chairman of the Board
Association for Clinical Oncology