



National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society

# Prior Authorization Reform

**Position:** Because prior authorization reviews can sometimes result in delays or disruptions in treatment, the National MS Society supports standards to streamline and improve the prior authorization process. The Society urges reasonable solutions to make the process more transparent, timely and user-friendly.

## Background on Prior Authorization

**Prior authorization requirements are utilized by health plans as a means to review the use of prescribed treatments and control costs.**

- Health plans often require the healthcare provider to submit documentation justifying his or her prescription. Then the health plan staff make their own determination about whether the prescribed treatment is the best choice for quality, cost-effective care. The insurer's goal is to eliminate payment for treatments that are ineffective or wasteful.
- Coverage by the health plan is only assured if and when the prior authorization request is approved.

**However, prior authorization processes can be burdensome for both healthcare providers and for people with MS.**

- Prior authorizations can require providers or patients to submit significant paperwork. When coverage is denied, additional paperwork may be necessary to appeal the decision.
- Prior authorizations may take days or even weeks, requiring providers to dedicate substantial staff time and resources to paperwork, rather than caring for patients.

**For people living with MS, prior authorization requirements can have a negative effect on their lives and health outcomes.**

- For example, a person with MS may have to delay receiving an MRI, or accessing a prescribed medication, for weeks or even months until their insurer's forms are submitted, reviewed, and approved.
- People with MS may increase their risk of lapsing treatment or even worsening the course of their disease activity as a result of these delays.

### What is multiple sclerosis (MS)?

- MS is an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system.
- MS interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body.
- Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis.
- The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted.

### Background: Washington State Prior Authorization Reporting Legislation SB 6404 (intro) would:

- Require robust reporting on frequency, usage, and timeframes around PA;
- Have insurers report the data to the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC);
- Direct the OIC to make the data collected available to the Legislature and report to them for research purposes;
- Forms and empowers a stakeholder group to better understand PA usage in WA
- The group makes recommendations to the OIC and Legislature regarding PA usage, over usage, and standardization of procedures;
- OIC shall adopt stakeholder group recommendations.