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Chairman Hottinger, Vice Chair Bacon, Ranking Member Brown and members of the Senate Insurance Committee, my name is Dr. Greg Sawchyn. I am a physician and director of clinical guidance councils for OhioHealth.

I am also here today to offer support for SB 129. I would like to share some of the challenges we face with prior authorization and general thoughts on how to improve the process.

There are two areas where I think opportunity exists to improve the prior authorization process. They are: (1) implementing time-sensitive parameters on insurers to issue a decision on a prior authorization request, and (2) requiring the prior authorization process to be web-based utilizing standardized forms.

First, requiring the insurer to respond in a set period of time can only improve the patient experience. Long delays in responding to prior authorization requests often leads to a patient not receiving the medicine she needs. So, for a non-emergent request, it would be helpful if insurers were required to make a decision within 48 hours. If a decision is not required within some reasonable timeframe, patients may be forced to delay their treatment. Or, a provider may issue treatment with no idea of who ultimately will be responsible for covering the costs.

Second, and this ties into the timing issue I just cited, a web-based prior authorization process would be a notable step in the right direction. Faxes are not efficient. With an electronic submittal process, there would exist an indisputable and traceable record of when a request is sent and received. This increases efficiency and accuracy and removes doubt about who sent or received what and when they sent or received it. Beyond that, a web-based system should presumably lead to a number of prior authorization requests being decided almost instantly. Standardizing information needed to make a decision would increase efficiency for insurers and providers alike by decreasing the number of denials and appeals due to incomplete information.

I appreciate Senator Gardner's efforts in introducing this legislation and working to find meaningful common sense improvements to a prior authorization process that certainly would benefit from some thoughtful changes.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to address any questions you might have.

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