

Larry Lanier
President, State Advocacy Community Outreach
National Patient Advocate Foundation
1100 H Street, NW | Suite 710
Washington, DC 20005
Larry.Lanier@npaf.org; 202.641.1810

Melissa Lorenzo Williams
Coordinator, State Government Relations
National Patient Advocate Foundation
1100 H Street, NW | Suite 710
Washington, DC 20005
Melissa.Williams@npaf.org; 202.573.6459

Ohio Senate Insurance Committee

Senate Bill 129 – SUPPORT

**(Jay Hottinger, Chairman; Kevin Bacon, Vice Chairman; Edna Brown, Ranking
Minority Leader; Troy Balderson; Bill Beagle; Jim Hughes; Shannon
Jones; Frank LaRose; Gayle Manning; Bob Peterson; Charleta Tavares;
Cecil Thomas; Sandra Williams)**

The National Patient Advocate Foundation serves as a voice for patients across America in regard to legislation and regulation that will benefit patient rights and needs. Our sister organization, the Patient Advocate Foundation, provides direct assistance to patients in all 50 states by helping to eliminate obstacles for patients trying to access quality healthcare. In 2014, the Patient Advocate Foundation provided direct assistance to 88,962 patients nationwide, including 3,887 patients in Ohio.

On behalf of these organizations and the Ohio patients we serve, we would like to express our written support of SB 129, legislation that would make great improvements to health insurance plans by reforming prior authorization requirements.

Prior authorization is a case management tool, used by insurers, intended to help standardize care and control costs; however, current prior authorization procedures create tremendous access problems for patients and can be burdensome for providers as the process is labor intensive, time consuming, and expensive for providers. The most serious and costly consequence of an inefficient prior authorization process, however, is when a patient is unable to obtain timely access to the medication that he or she really needs. When that occurs, studies have shown that a patient's health care can deteriorate rapidly and in many cases requires intensive hospital care, where costs per day may range upward of \$6,000 - \$10,000.

SB 129 aims to protect patients and improve the prior authorization process so that it is not burdensome for providers. NPAF strongly supports the following provisions:

- 1) A standardized form no longer than 2 pages;
- 2) A clinical review criteria to base all prior authorization decisions;
- 3) Allowing for secure electronic transmission of prior authorization requests;
- 4) Requiring health plans to respond within 24 hours for urgent medical needs and within 48 hours for all other medical needs;
- 5) Automatically approving prior authorization requests if the health plan does not respond within the required time limits;
- 6) Requiring health plans to disclose health benefit product information on their website to include the most recently published drug formulary, information on the health benefit product's tier structure; and the drug utilization management system for each drug placed on the formulary.

We believe the above provisions will improve the prior authorization process tremendously and help ensure that patients receive the quality healthcare they need and deserve. NPAF also advocates for prescribing physicians to override an insurer's determination, if the original prescription for the patient is deemed medically necessary.

The 3,887 Ohio patients who contacted the Patient Advocate Foundation did so because of obstacles in receiving healthcare. By voting to advance SB 129, the committee will help to remove one of those obstacles from further affecting Ohio patients. In closing, we stand in support of this important legislation and urge you to do so as well to reduce the inefficiency of the current prior authorization process, improve communication between the insurer and the prescriber, and most of all, to allow Ohio patients to receive their treatment in a manner that is consistent with quality health care. Please feel free to contact me directly at Melissa.Williams@npaf.org or at (202) 573- 6459 if you would like to further discuss NPAF's position on this issue. We thank you for the opportunity to submit our written testimony.