



**Proponent Testimony HB 130**  
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**June 7, 2023**

Chairman Lampton, Vice Chair Barhorst, and Ranking Member Miranda, and members of the Ohio House Insurance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 130. My name is Dr. Jonathan Scharfstein, and I am President of the Academy of Medicine of Cleveland & Northern Ohio (AMCNO). I am also a practicing cardiologist at a major health system in Cleveland.

The AMCNO, founded in 1824, is the region's professional medical association and the oldest professional association in Ohio. We are a non-profit 501(c)6 representing physicians and medical students from all the contiguous counties in Northern Ohio. We are proud to be the stewards of Cleveland's medical community of the past, present, and future. Our mission is to support physicians in being strong advocates for all patients and promote the practice of the highest quality of medicine. On behalf of our over 6,000 members and their patients, **I ask you to support HB 130 to establish an exemption to prior authorization requirements and decrease the administrative burden on Ohio's physicians.**

The current prior authorization system in Ohio is extremely arduous for physicians, and it often causes unnecessary delays in patient care. As an organization representing physicians, we are particularly worried about the burden the prior authorization system places on our physicians, particularly amid workforce shortages and an epidemic of health care worker burnout. Spending hours upon hours justifying our prescribed treatments takes away the time that we spend with our patients, when connecting with patients was the reason that we entered the medical field in the first place. This bill is an easy step that can be taken to refocus the physician's time where it should be -- on treating our patients.

Beyond the issues of burnout, prior authorization causes increased costs to the system, and serious consequences for patients and their health. Prior authorizations especially add to the workload of private practice physicians who do not have the resources or staffing needed to keep up with prior authorizations considering that "physicians and their staff spend an average of almost two business days (14 hours) each week completing PAs."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> AMA Prior Authorization (PA) Physician Survey. 2022. American Medical Association. <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/prior-authorization-survey.pdf>

Patients also suffer the consequences of prior authorizations by having delays in receiving necessary tests, treatment, and/or medication. One Ohio patient shared online that her sister “broke her ankles and the insurance company has denied every request her doctor has made for every test. She is now unable to walk.”<sup>2</sup> This experience is not unique considering that **94% of physicians reported care delays associated with prior authorization.**<sup>3</sup>

We believe that patient care and physicians’ provision of such should not be impeded by the red tape of prior authorizations. This bill is an important first step in protecting our physicians from unnecessary strain by rewarding physicians who are good actors, keeping our exceptional workforce of healthcare workers in Ohio, and recruiting more physicians to our great state. Without this bill’s passage, physicians may be incentivized to move to states that have already passed similar legislation including Texas, West Virginia, Louisiana, and Michigan.

It is for all these reasons that we stand in support of HB 130. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

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<sup>2</sup> Patients and Physicians Speak Out. 2023. American Medical Association. <https://fixpriorauth.org/stories>.

<sup>3</sup> AMA Prior Authorization (PA) Physician Survey. 2022. American Medical Association. <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/prior-authorization-survey.pdf>