

Impact of Clinical Competency on the Prior Authorization Process

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Background

- The intent of prior authorizations is to ensure that drug therapy is medically necessary, clinically appropriate, and aligns with evidence-based guidelines.¹
- By virtue of the advances in our understanding of specific mutation-based clinical implications and the epistatic relationship between co-occurring mutations, as well as the role that the immune environment plays in therapy selection, the long-standing paradigm of matching a single gene to a single treatment is rapidly evolving.²
- Pharmacy staff face challenges in staying up to date on the latest targeted therapies and indication updates. These challenges can impact aspects of patient care. For example, turnaround time for prior authorizations can increase due to incomplete or inaccurate submissions which result in denials and need for appeal.

Objective

- Analyze how a detailed, ongoing training of non-licensed healthcare staff can ensure the success of prior authorizations of oral oncology medications.
- Analysis includes annual prior authorization approval rates (submissions vs. approvals) for initial submissions and denial by employee submission error rate. Additionally analyzed changes in team member orientation/education tools.

Methods

- Analyzed prior authorization submission totals and approval rates for calendar years 2021, 2022, 2023.
- Analyzed prior authorization denials by reason for denial for years 2021, 2022 and 2023.
- Compiled list of team member orientation and education tools employed for years 2021, 2022, 2023

	2021	2022	2023
Prior Authorization Submissions	14,253	14,453	15,687
Prior Authorization Approvals	11,876	12,813	14,414
Approval Rate	83%	89%	92%

Discussions

- New education initiatives implemented every year to supplement previous strategies.
- Prior authorization approval rates improved each an average of 5 % each calendar year.
- Denials by reason of employee error decreased from 4.2% at the beginning of 2021 to 2.5% at the end of 2023.

Initiative Timeline

- Initiatives for education/orientation:
 - 2021- Full 12 week new team member orientation focused on disease states and specific medications guided by assigned preceptor
 - 2022- PA reference guide developed
 - 2022- Invited to attend manufacturer in-services detailing new medications and indication updates
 - 2022- Quarterly Clinical Pharmacist presentations on specific medications
 - 2023- Team member led case studies during staff meetings
 - 2023- Development and use of New Drug/Indication Updates handouts

Conclusion

- Constructing an intensive new hire orientation and ongoing structured, clinical education can improve the prior authorization process by reducing denials including those resulting from employee submission errors.

References:

- 1-Forrester, C. Benefits of Prior Authorizations. J Manag Care Spec Pharm. 2020 Jul; 26(7): 10.18553/jmcp.2020.26.7.820. doi: 10.18553/jmcp.2020.26.7.820
- 2-Murciano-Goroff, Y., Suehnholz, S. Drilon, A., Chakravarty, D., Precision Oncology: 2023 Review. Cancer Discov. 2023 Dec 12; 13(12): 2525-2531. Published online 2023 Dec 12. doi: 10.1158/2159-8290.CD-23-1194

