Supporting Oncology Patients Through Medication Prior Authorizations and Appeals

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Introduction/Background

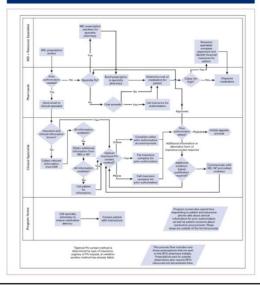
- >The United States has more oncology drugs available compared to other countries, but that doesn't mean patients have access to them.
- >\$10,000 to \$25,000 per month is the price range for an FDA-approved oral cancer medication.
- >Pharmacy benefit manager (PBMs) require prescribers to secure preapproval (prior authorization) prior to insurance coverage or payment for a prescribed medication.
- >Financial and administrative burden may fall on practices and patients due to these PRM practices
- >Step therapies, formulary tiers, and prior authorizations make it more difficult for patients to obtain prescribed medication.
- >Prior authorization approval for oral oncology medications can take a few days to over a month depending on complexity.
- >A 2020 study found that the median time from initial prescription to prior authorization was 3 days and the median time from initial prescription to patient receipt of drug was 12 days.
- >Access challenges account for 27% of prescription abandonment.
- ➤In a 2017 survey by the American Medical Association, 92% of physicians reported prior authorization can have a negative impact on clinical outcomes.
- >A 2009 study that surveyed physician practices about time spent on interactions with health plans found that: physicians spent 1.0 hour per week, nursing staff spent 13.1 hours per week, and clerical staff spent 6.3 hours per week on authorization activities.

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Methods

- >Hundreds of oncology scripts come into AON Pharmacy monthly. These scripts get input into our pharmacy software system.
- The next step is benefits verification. The insurance is added, and a test claim is run on the patient's insurance.
- >Most scripts will require a prior authorization through insurance.
- >Our benefits verification team contacts the patient to relay that a prior authorization is needed through their insurance.
- >An event is created for the prior authorization team in our pharmacy
- >Prior authorizations can create significant delays and therefore create barriers to the patient starting their medication in a timely manner.
- >We utilize the EMR to find the patient's most recent diagnosis and chart
- >Most prior authorizations can be submitted electronically through CoverMvMeds, Eviti, Evicore, and Liviniti.



Results

- >AON Pharmacy Prior Authorization Statistics:
 - >Average Days to Approval: 1.65 days
 - >84.9% Approval Rate
 - ≥63.0% Appeal Approval Rate
 - >From January 1, 2024 to July 31, 2024 we have had: 1,296 Approvals, 231 Denials, 46 Appeal Approvals, and 27 Appeal
- Some prior authorizations are denied by the insurance. When denials occur, we reach out to the patient to notify them and outline the next steps.
- When doing appeals: we work with the provider to obtain a letter of medical necessity, attach chart notes, and peer reviewed articles to explain the necessity of the medication for the patient.
- >Should the appeal get denied we reach out to the patient again regarding the denial. We will work with the provider to submit a second level appeal if appropriate.
- >Once a second level appeal has been denied an event is created for our patient assistance team to attempt to help the patient obtain free medication from the
- >Patients are often switched to a less preferred drug if manufacturer assistance is not available for the prescribed medication.
- >Patients become anxious and concerned about medication access during the prior authorization process.

Discussion

- >As a Medically Integrated Pharmacy, AON Pharmacy can assist practices within
- AON Pharmacy assists the clinics with the prior authorization process which helps to remove the staff and financial burden normally placed on the clinics.
- >By assisting the clinics, we expedite the process and provide patients with quicker access to care.
- Patient's often have financial concerns after the prior authorization has been approved. We are also able to assist the patient with navigating patient assistance.
- >Once the patient has received their medication our pharmacists are able to provide detailed counseling and are resources when questions arise.

References

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