

The Gazette

Reject proposed rule for arthritis medication



Chris Andersen, guest columnist

JANUARY 1, 2015 | 12:15 AM

It is disheartening to learn of the Iowa Insurance Division's proposed rule for the prior authorization of prescription medications by insurers in Iowa.

My 14-year-old daughter, Nikole, was diagnosed 10 years ago with juvenile arthritis. She has had both hips replaced, three procedures completed on her knees and endured countless needles and injections along with numerous hospital stays and missed school days. Her battle has been a long one and medications are essential for her treatment.

The Insurance Division's proposed rule would make patients wait up to three days for access to medication or care. The three-day wait still would apply if your doctor determines you would be subject to severe pain that cannot be adequately managed without the care or treatment for which you are requesting authorization.

While three days might seem a short time, three days without a critical prescription could launch Nikole into a serious arthritis flare, rendering her immobile, in immense pain and being detrimental to her health. I do not want my child to be in severe pain for a single moment, forget three days, while an insurer evaluates the request for medication, even longer if authorization is denied and the decision must be appealed.

This proposed rule is particularly bad public policy for people with arthritis, but also will impact anyone with a number of other serious medical conditions. But there is something that can be done.

Between now and Jan. 6, the Iowa Insurance Division is asking for public comment on the proposed rule. Comments may be submitted via email to angela.burke.boston@iid.iowa.gov, by phone (515-281-4119) or at the public hearing at 10 a.m., Jan. 6 at the Iowa Insurance Division's offices at 601 Locust St., fourth floor, in Des Moines.

On behalf of the parents of the 2,800 children suffering from juvenile arthritis, as well as more than 564,000 Iowans with some form of arthritis, I ask that the Iowa Insurance Commissioner take Nikole's situation into consideration, and the thousands of other Iowans impacted, when addressing the proposed rule on prior authorization.

• *Chris Andersen has volunteered with the Arthritis Foundation for much of the nearly eleven years since his daughter was diagnosed with juvenile arthritis.*

Comments: andersenwc@yahoo.com