

From the Iowa City Press-Citizen

Proposed rule a threat to health

Chris Andersen, Nevada, Letter to the Editor 4:54 p.m. CST December 28, 2014

As a parent of a child with juvenile arthritis, it's disheartening to learn of the Iowa Insurance Division's proposed rule for prior authorization of prescription medications by Iowa insurers. My 14-year old-daughter, Nikole, was diagnosed 10 years ago with JA. Her battle has been long and her medications are essential for her treatment.

The Insurance Division's proposed rule would make you or a loved one wait up to three days to access medications or care for which waiting could either "seriously jeopardize the life or health of the patient or the ability of the patient to regain maximum function."

Even worse, if your doctor determines that you would be subject to "severe pain" that cannot be adequately managed without care or treatment, the request still doesn't have to be resolved for three days.

I do not want my child to be in severe pain for a single moment, forget three days, while an insurer evaluates the request.

This proposed rule is bad policy for anyone who requires prior authorization of medications.

But there is something that can be done. Between now and Jan. 6, the Iowa Insurance Division is asking for public comment. This can be done via email (angela.burke.boston@iid.iowa.gov), phone (515-281-4119) or at the Jan. 6 public hearing (10 a.m., Two Ruan Center, 601 Locust, fourth floor, Des Moines.)

The Insurance Commissioner needs to get this issue right and limit the prior authorization process to no more than 24 hours or, in the best-case scenario, deemed automatically granted if urgent.

Chris Andersen
Nevada

The Newton Daily News

Prior authorization rule is threat to kids

Published: Monday, Jan. 5, 2015 10:59 a.m. CST

Chris Andersen - Nevada

As a parent of a child with juvenile arthritis (JA), it's disheartening to learn of the Iowa Insurance Division's proposed rule for prior authorization of prescription medications by Iowa insurers. My 14-year-old daughter, Nikole, was diagnosed 10 years ago with JA. She's had both hips replaced, three knee procedures, countless needles and injections along with hospital stays and missed school days. Her battle has been long and her medications are essential for her treatment.

The Insurance Division's proposed rule would make you or a loved one wait up to three days to access medications or care for which waiting could either "seriously jeopardize the life or health of the patient or the ability of the patient to regain maximum function."

Even worse, if your doctor determines that you would be subject to "severe pain" that cannot be adequately managed without care or treatment that is the reason for the authorization request – the request still doesn't have to be resolved for three days.

While three days for urgent authorizations could seem like a short time, three days without a critical prescription could launch Nikole into a serious arthritis flare, rendering her immobile and in immense pain.

I do not want my child to be in severe pain for a single moment, forget three days, while an insurer evaluates the request. Imagine even worse yet, after three days your insurer denies authorization and you have to go through further delay of an appeals process.

This proposed rule is bad policy for people with arthritis but will impact anyone that requires prior authorization of medications. This includes people with cancer, asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, leukemia, psoriasis, lupus and other serious conditions.

But there is something that can be done. The Iowa Insurance Division is asking for public comment through Tuesday. This can be done via email (angela.burke.boston@iid.iowa.gov), phone call (515-281-4119) or at the Tuesday public hearing (10 a.m. IA Insurance Division, Two Ruan Center, 601 Locust, 4th Floor, Des Moines.)

The Insurance Commissioner needs to get this issue right and limit the prior authorization process to no more than 24 hours or, in the best case scenario, deemed automatically granted if urgent. 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.

The Gazette

Reject proposed rule for arthritis medication



Alpha Omicron Phi's Heather Job and Phi Kappa Tau's Zach Geppes participate in a 24-hour teeter-totter fundraiser for the Arthritis Foundation and SeriousFun Children's Network on the campus of Coe College in Cedar Rapids on September 24, 2014. (Adam Wesley/The Gazette)

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.