

April 21, 2021

Honorable Senator Kelly Hancock  
Chair, Senate Business and Commerce Committee  
Texas State Capitol  
Austin, TX

**RE: House Bill 907– Support**

Dear Chair Kelly Hancock,

The Arthritis Foundation encourages your support of House Bill 907. This important bill would ensure that a health benefit plan issuer that provides prescription drug benefits may not require an enrollee to receive more than one prior authorization annually of the prescription drug benefit for a prescription drug prescribed to treat an autoimmune disease. This would include autoimmune arthritis diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, juvenile arthritis diseases and many more.

In a December 2020 survey by the American Medical Association <sup>1</sup>, almost 70% of 1,000 practicing physicians surveyed reported that health insurers had either reverted to past prior authorization policies or never relaxed these policies in the first place. More than nine in 10 physicians (94%) reported care delays while waiting for health insurers to authorize necessary care, and nearly four in five physicians (79%) said patients abandon treatment due to authorization struggles with health insurers. Patients surveyed by the Arthritis Foundation in 2017, then again in following years, indicated that prior authorization was one of the top two most burdensome insurance issues.

Typically, physicians must fill out a prior authorization form whenever they prescribe a specialty medication or treatment that is restricted or not covered under an insurance carrier's formulary. Many patients seeking medication vital to their arthritis treatment are held up by prior authorization, a process in which a physician must submit tedious paper work before writing a prescription. As a result, prior authorization typically causes lengthy delays in treatment, thereby restricting a person's access to vital care.

On behalf of the more than 4.1 million people in Texas with arthritis, the Arthritis Foundation strongly urges the Senate Business and Commerce Committee to support HB 907.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2021-04/prior-authorization-survey.pdf>

Sincerely,



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CC: Members, Senate Business and Commerce Committee

