



Kentucky Society of Addiction Medicine

A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine

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February 25, 2020

The Honorable Bart Rowland
Chair, House Committee on Banking and Insurance
702 Capital Ave
Frankfort, KY 40601

Re: Support for HB389

Dear Chairman Rowland and members of the House Committee on Banking and Insurance,

On behalf of the Kentucky Society of Addiction Medicine (KYSAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and clinicians in Kentucky who specialize in the treatment of addiction, we would like to take this opportunity to provide our support for HB389, which would prohibit an insurer or Medicaid from requiring or conducting a prospective or concurrent review for a prescription drug containing methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone that is used in the treatment of opioid use disorder. With the addiction and overdose epidemic significantly impacting Kentucky, KYSAM appreciates the effort to expand access to high-quality, evidence-based, and comprehensive addiction treatment services.

KYSAM is dedicated to increasing access to and improving the quality of addiction treatment for patients in Kentucky and across the country. To that end, we are committed to advocating for a state addiction treatment system that provides and expands access to all Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medications to treat addiction. Ensuring addiction treatment services are not subject to arbitrary limits or unfair utilization controls, in comparison to health care services for other chronic medical illnesses, is a critical part of our efforts to improve access to care. We believe HB389 will effectively eliminate the barrier to care that prior authorization and other prospective utilization controls can cause for patients presenting themselves for addiction treatment.

Due to harmful consequences of non-evidenced-based utilization controls and consistent with sound medical care, decisions about the type, modality, and duration of treatment should remain in the purview of doctors and their patients. Additionally, arbitrary limitations on the duration of treatment, medication dosage, or on levels of care that are not supported by medical evidence, are not appropriate and can be specifically detrimental to the wellbeing of the patient and their community. Given how dangerous these non-evidence-based limitations are, they should not be enforced by law, regulation, or health insurance practices. KYSAM



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applauds the bill's sponsors for introducing legislation to ensure that the provision of benefits for buprenorphine, methadone, or naltrexone for treatment of opioid use disorder to eligible persons under health plans and the Medicaid program, which is a major provider of addiction treatment services to our most vulnerable patients, shall be provided without the imposition of prior authorization requirements or other prospective utilization management requirements.

Prior authorization and other utilization controls are not based on sound scientific or medical evidence and ignores the fact that every patient's needs are different. These policies create a delay, or a barrier entirely, in accessing necessary care during vital moments when patients present themselves for treatment. In the case of addiction, it is imperative to stabilize patients in order to begin comprehensive treatment with pharmacological therapy accompanied and provided in conjunction with evidence-based psychosocial services and recovery support interventions. This situation can be a life or death matter and non-evidence-based utilization controls can inappropriately force patients to either wait for or forgo treatment entirely.

KYSAM shares the state of Kentucky's goal of providing access to high-quality, evidence-based, and comprehensive addiction treatment services. We thank the bill's sponsors for introducing HB389 and urge the House Committee on Banking and Insurance to vote in favor of this legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Michael Fletcher at (859) 462-6065 or at dr.michaelfletcher@gmail.com if KYSAM can be of any service to you. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Michael Fletcher, MD
President, Kentucky Society of Addiction Medicine

CC:

The Honorable Joe Fischer
The Honorable Deanna Frazier
The Honorable Jim Gooch
The Honorable Adam Koenig
The Honorable Stan Lee
The Honorable Derek Lewis
The Honorable Michael Meredith
The Honorable Sal Santoro



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The Honorable Ken Upchurch
The Honorable Terri Branham Clark
The Honorable Jim Glenn
The Honorable Kathy Hinkle
The Honorable Dennis Keene
The Honorable Dean Schamore
The Honorable Wilson Stone
The Honorable Rob Wiederstein