

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 4, 2020

Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Verma,

On the House Committee on Small Business, we recognize our small, physician-owned practices as small businesses, and see their success as crucial for creating healthy communities across the country. Before this crisis began, this Committee was active in advocating for smart relief from the administrative and regulatory burden that is crushing these practices. Unfortunately, this crisis has only exacerbated the existing problems, and now threatens the ability of these practices to stay afloat. **We urge the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to instruct Medicare Advantage and Part D prescription drug plans to waive their prior authorization requirements for the duration of this national emergency.**

Due to CMS recommendations, many physician practices have been forced to postpone elective procedures, and medical professionals have been urged to limit non-urgent care. As a result, the only remaining procedures are those required to keep patients alive, or to prevent serious permanent damage. Furthermore, those who still require access to medication and procedures are the immunocompromised who are in greater danger of COVID-19. Therefore, patients that still require treatment should not be burdened with the delays caused by prior authorization requirements.

As we hear from many of our nation's medical professionals, administrative staff have been furloughed or laid off, leading to a greater administrative burden falling on the practice. We on this Committee believe that it is not in the interest of the public to require medical professionals to devote their precious time to billing when they should be worrying about patients.

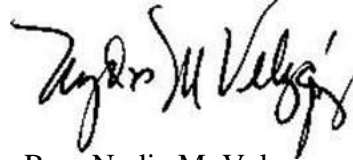
Additionally, we urge you to instruct Medicare Advantage and Part D plans to eliminate new prior authorization requirements for services or drugs that have already been approved. Medical providers are delaying non-emergency procedures and services in accordance with Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state, and local guidance, and approvals for those procedures should be extended until it is safe to perform them.

We praise the decision of CMS to limit the use of prior authorization for Medicaid plans in 13 states. However, we hope you will expand this to every state affected by COVID-19 and to Medicare Advantage and Part D prescription drug plans as well.

Sincerely,



Rep. Sharice L. Davids
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Rep. Nydia M. Velazquez
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Rep. Dwight Evans
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Rep. Jason Crow
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Rep. Abby Finkenauer
MEMBER OF CONGRESS