

# Prior Authorization

*Protecting patient safety*

## What is prior authorization?

Prior authorization is a process used by health plans to ensure members receive the right care, in the right setting, and at the right time. Prior authorization is foundational to health plans, as it helps ensure members receive safe, clinically appropriate and evidence-based care that enhances their health. Too often, health care dollars are wasted on services that are inappropriate or not needed. In fact, physicians have agreed that 15 to 20% of medical care in the U.S. is unnecessary.

## How does prior authorization work?

Providers request prior authorization from the health plan when recommending care for a member. The health plan's team of medical experts review the requested care against guidelines based on the latest medical recommendations. If the guidelines are met, the procedure is approved. If not, the health plan will request additional information or offer alternative options for care.

## How does prior authorization protect patients?

Health plans see the full picture of a patient's health. Prior authorization means health plans can help the member avoid care that is poor quality, unnecessary, or even harmful. For example, health plans can catch when a patient is prescribed a medication that would interact with an existing drug they are taking.

Prior authorization also empowers health plans to walk alongside members in their health journey through case management and other beneficial services to maximize their health outcomes.

## Does prior authorization keep coverage premiums affordable?

Yes! Prior authorization allows the health plan to guarantee its members only receive beneficial, needed care services, which stewards premium dollars well and helps prevent increases in coverage premiums.

## LEARN MORE

Scan the QR code to hear a health care coverage expert explain why prior authorization is important and how it helps Oklahomans.



## ABOUT OAHF

The Oklahoma Association of Health Plans is a coalition of health plans who collectively strive to ensure every Oklahoman has access to high-quality and affordable health care.