

Position Statement on Prior Authorizations for Psychotropic Medications

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2014

Approved by the Assembly, May 2014

"Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees...These are...position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects..." – *APA Operations Manual*.

Issue

The process of requiring prior authorization for payment or dispensing of psychotropic medication by third party insurance plans or other entities is detrimental to patients care. This process often results in delays for patients in receiving life-sustaining medications (authorization denials and the need to prescribe a non-first choice medication), and always results in psychiatrists using large amounts of what would otherwise be clinical time to complete the essential prescribing transaction

There is no clear researched evidence base that this process improves the quality of patient care or is cost effective.

Position Statement

The American Psychiatric Association is opposed to any requirement of prior authorization for psychotropic medications prescribed by psychiatrists prior to payment by insurers, except for instances of clear outlier practices or an established evidence base which implicates concern for patient safety. In those instances, the decision to require prior authorization or documentation should be made only by a Board Certified Psychiatrist.

Authors: Robert Feder, MD, DFAPA, Representative, New Hampshire Psychiatric Society and Roger Peele, M.D., DLFAPA, Representative, Washington Psychiatric Society with additional input from the members of the Council on Healthcare Systems and Financing: Harsh Trivedi, M.D., Karen Hopp, M.D., Susan McLeer, M.D., Laurence Miller, M.D., Paul Wick, M.D., Mary Ann Badaracco, M.D., Lisa Hovermale, M.D., Anand Pandya, M.D., Eliot Sorel, M.D., Ole Thienhaus, M.D., Grant Mitchell, M.D., and Lori Raney, M.D.