

UPDATE



neurosurgery

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 27, 2022

Contact:

Katie O. Orrico

(703) 362-4637

korrico@neurosurgery.org

Neurosurgeons Applaud Progress of Legislation to Streamline Prior Authorization in Medicare House Ways and Means Committee action is a critical step in advancing legislation to ensure timely access to care.

Washington, DC—Today, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) applauded the House Ways and Means Committee for advancing the *Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act*, as amended ([H.R 8487](#)) out of committee. This legislation would protect patients in Medicare Advantage from unnecessary prior authorization practices that limit their timely access to medically necessary care.

With over 300 co-sponsors in the House and endorsed by 500 state and national organizations representing patients, health care providers, and the medical technology and biopharmaceutical industry, this legislation is primed for action.

Prior authorization is a cumbersome process that requires physicians to obtain pre-approval for medical treatments or tests before rendering care to their patients. Obtaining this approval is burdensome and costly to physician practices, requiring physicians and their staff to spend an enormous amount of time negotiating with insurance companies each week. As a result, patients experience significant barriers to medically necessary care, even for treatments and tests that are eventually routinely approved.

“The onerous prior authorization process has increased significantly over the last several years — causing unacceptable delays and denials of medical treatments. Our patients cannot afford to wait or jump through unnecessary hoops to get care for painful and life-threatening neurologic conditions. This progress is a vital step towards preserving patients’ timely access to care,” said **John K. Ratliff**, MD, FAANS, FACS, a neurosurgeon at Stanford University and chair of the AANS/CNS Washington Committee.

Dr. Ratliff concluded, “America’s neurosurgeons especially want to thank Ways and Means Committee members, Representatives Suzan DelBene and Mike Kelly, for their leadership in drafting this bill, and for Chairman Neal and Ranking Member Brady for acting on the legislation. Now it’s time for Congress to finish the job and pass this bill before the end of the year.”

To bring improved transparency and oversight to the Medicare Advantage program, the AANS and the CNS have joined forces with the [Regulatory Relief Coalition](#) — a group of national physician specialty organizations advocating for a reduction in Medicare program regulatory burdens to protect patients’ timely access to care. The RRC has been an important ally in the efforts to advance the *Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act*.

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The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), founded in 1931, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), founded in 1951, are the two largest scientific and educational associations for neurosurgical professionals in the world. These groups represent over 10,000 neurosurgeons worldwide. Neurological surgery is the medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. For more information, please visit www.aans.org, www.cns.org and www.neurosurgery.org.