



Annual Report 2025

Protecting Patients' Timely Access to Care



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Executive Summary

The Regulatory Relief Coalition (RRC) led the way in Washington, championing physicians in service of our nation's seniors and advancing policies that improve prior authorization (PA) and establish oversight of Medicare Advantage (MA) organizations. Through our tireless advocacy with PA reform champions and staff in Congress and the Administration, RRC established the *Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care (Seniors')* Act as the principal prior authorization legislative priority for national medical specialty societies and state medical associations. The *Seniors'* Act is the most widely supported, no cost healthcare legislation in the first half of the 119th Congress, and the first bill ever formally endorsed by the GOP Doc Caucus.

NAVIGATING LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY SHIFTS

With a new Congress and Administration, RRC proactively navigated confirmation hearings, legislative developments, and stakeholder engagement in response to evolving priorities. RRC tracked legislative and regulatory developments, leveraging its expertise to anticipate policy changes and provide members with guidance on potential impacts and emerging opportunities. RRC also analyzed the WISER Model, announced by CMS in June, voicing our strong concerns to the Administration about the impact of expanding prior authorization in Medicare FFS on care delivery and provider burden.

MAJORITY IN CONGRESS SUPPORTS THE SENIORS' ACT

On May 20, the six House and Senate champions introduced the *Seniors'* Act with 47 Senate and 73 House original cosponsors. Following introduction, RRC held nearly 100 virtual visits with potential cosponsors and led discussions with Hill champions on CMS technical assistance (TA). RRC secured support from a majority of the House (243), a supermajority of the Senate (64), and 300+ organizations.

We are confident RRC will continue to be the leading resource to policymakers as they improve MA to be more transparent, efficient, and effective for seniors and the physicians who care for them.



About the Regulatory Relief Coalition

The RRC is a group of national physician specialty organizations advocating for regulatory burden reduction in Medicare so that physicians can spend more time treating patients.

Comprised of 16 national physician organizations and 2 allied organizations.

The leading voice for prior authorization (PA) reforms in federal legislation and regulation.



FOCUS

Common sense reform of Medicare Advantage (MA) plans use of Prior Authorization (PA).



GOAL

Ensure PA is removed as a barrier to timely access to care by passing the *Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care (Seniors') Act*.



RESULTS

The leading group in contact with bill champions and leadership staff, advising them on a myriad of policy, legal, and political matters.

RRC is the driving force behind the Seniors' Act and multiple CMS finalized rules reforming prior authorization.



RRC Members



American Academy of
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation



American
Association of
Neurological
Surgeons



AMERICAN
COLLEGE *of*
CARDIOLOGY



Congress of
Neurological
Surgeons



SCAI
Society for Cardiovascular
Angiography & Interventions



RRC Allies



Member & Ally Key Contributions

RRC's work would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of our member and allied organizations. Each group leveraged their organization's strengths and resources to collectively help reduce patient barriers to timely access to care.

MEMBERS

Special thanks to the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO), the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), RRC founders who served as coalition leaders providing the vision for RRC's past and future strategy successes. RRC members have been especially active in advancing the coalition's work as outlined in slide 7.

Social Media Engagement

Thank you to our members for their continued social media engagement. Members actively participated in awareness campaigns by posting and sharing RRC content. RRC achieved unprecedented success for the coalition in social media reach, garnering tens of thousands of views on posts shared on Twitter/X and LinkedIn.





Direct Lobbying for Seniors' Act Cosponsors

Outstanding Participation

- American College of Cardiology
- American College of Surgeons
- Medical Group Management Association
- Society for Cardiovascular Angiography & Interventions

Frequent Participation

- American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons
- American College of Rheumatology
- American Gastroenterological Association
- American Society of Clinical Oncology

Reliable Participation

- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Neurology
- American Academy of Ophthalmology
- American Academy of Physician Medicine and Rehabilitation
- American Association of Neurological Surgeons/ Congress of Neurological Surgeons
- American Osteopathic Association
- Heart Rhythm Advocates

ALLIES

RRC allies – the American Podiatric Medical Association and the National Association for Proton Therapy- also played a pivotal role in lobbying, grassroots, social media engagement, and research and analysis.

Legislative & Regulatory Highlights | 2025

RRC spearheaded initiatives reforming PA within Congress and CMS including active engagement in the introduction of the *Seniors' Act*.

JAN	RRC submits comments on CMS' Contract Year 2026 Medicare Advantage Proposed Rule.
MARCH - APRIL	RRC works with House and Senate champions on mindful adjustments to the <i>Seniors' Act</i> language to propel passage. RRC activates grassroots and supporter network to secure cosponsors and endorsers for bill introduction.
MAY	Bipartisan <i>Seniors' Act</i> introduced: 47 Senate and 73 House original cosponsors and > 140 endorsing organizations.
JUNE	RRC issues a press release in response to the AHIP Consensus Statement to reduce PA.
JULY	RRC submits written testimony to the House Ways and Means Committee for its hearing on MA.
JULY-NOV	RRC meets with nearly 100 House and Senate offices to request cosponsorship.
AUGUST	RRC submits comments to CMS opposing the WISER Model in Medicare FFS.
SEPT	<i>Seniors' Act</i> achieves a major milestone with over 218 House cosponsors and over 60 Senate cosponsors.
DEC	RRC meets with Senior Counselor, CMS' Office of the Administrator, Dr. Oz' key HHS health care portfolio advisor.
DEC	RRC facilitates member sign-on to WISER repeal bills led by Rep. DelBene and Sen. Murray.
DEC	RRC facilitates <i>Seniors' Act</i> endorsement for leading rural health organizations and the Mental Health Liaison Group.
DEC	Champions and cosponsors contact leadership to encourage inclusion of <i>Seniors' Act</i> in end of year legislation.



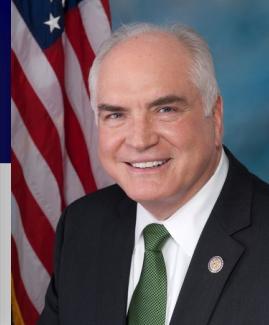
Legislative Action

Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act (*Seniors' Act*)

HOUSE CHAMPIONS



Suzan DelBene (D-WA)



Mike Kelly (R-PA)



Ami Bera, MD (D-CA)



John Joyce, MD (R-PA)

SENATE CHAMPIONS



Roger Marshall, MD (R-KS)



Mark Warner (D-VA)

KEY PROVISIONS

The *Seniors' Act* would put patients over paperwork by modernizing the PA process, providing transparency, and additional oversight to the MA program:

- Establish e-PA program for MA plans including a standardization for transactions and clinical attachments.
- Create transparency regarding MA PA requirements and their use.
- Clarify CMS' authority to establish timeframes for e-PA requests including expedited determinations, real-time decisions for routinely approved items and services, and any other PA request.
- Expand beneficiary protections to improve enrollee experiences and outcomes.
- Require the Secretary of HHS and other agencies to report to Congress on program integrity efforts and other ways to further improve the e-PA process.



RRC
Regulating the Future

Congress Supports the *Seniors' Act*

RRC GAINS WIDESPREAD CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT

The Seniors' Act is the most widely supported, \$0 cost healthcare bill in the first half of the 119th Congress, and the first bill ever formally endorsed by the GOP Doc Caucus. A majority of House members and a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate support the bill.



243

COSPONSORS

151 Democrats

92 Republicans

65

COSPONSORS

35 Democrats

30 Republicans

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- 39 Energy & Commerce Committee **72%**
- 33 Ways & Means Committee **73%**
- 10 GOP Doctors Caucus **71%**
- 6 Democrat Doctors Caucus **100%**

U.S. SENATE

- 17 Senate Finance Committee **63%**
- 13 Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee **56%**

56% of House Members | 65% of Senate Members



Seniors' Act Endorsements Renew, Expand

RRC REGAINS WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS

More than 180 national organizations and over 125 regional, state and district organizations, representing patients, health plans, health care providers, the medical device and biopharmaceutical industry endorsed the *Seniors' Act*.

SENIORS' GARNERS RENEWED INSURER SUPPORT: BMA OCTOBER 2025

"Administrator Oz said: 'We do need it [prior authorization], but it's got to be done the right way.' This approach is consistent with BMA's strong support for bipartisan efforts to modernize prior authorization, including the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act."



SUPPORT FROM KEY RURAL & MENTAL HEALTH GROUPS

National Rural Health Association **NARHC** **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RURAL HEALTH CLINICS** **NARMH**
LeadingAge **McMA** **MEDICAL GROUP MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

December 3, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
 Speaker of the House
 H-232, The Capitol
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
 House Minority Leader
 H-204, The Capitol
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
 Senate Majority Leader
 S-230, The Capitol
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
 Senate Minority Leader
 S-221, The Capitol
 Washington, DC 20515

RE: National Rural Organizations Urge Passage of the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act (S. 1816/H.R. 3514).

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leaders Thune, Jeffries, and Schumer,

On behalf of the undersigned national organizations committed to improving the health and well-being of rural communities, we write to express our deep concern about the impact of prior authorization requirements in Medicare Advantage on patients and providers in rural America and to urge swift passage of the *Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act* (S. 1816/H.R. 3514).

Over 10 million Medicare beneficiaries live in rural areas, and more than 42% of beneficiaries in the most rural areas are enrolled in Medicare Advantage.¹ Rural beneficiaries often experience higher rates of chronic conditions, greater economic challenges, and fewer healthcare resources compared to urban populations. Prior authorization requirements in Medicare Advantage further restrict access to care and exacerbate these disparities.

Prior authorization use has been historically higher in Medicare Advantage than in Traditional Fee-for-Service (FFS) Medicare. In 2023, Medicare Advantage insurers made nearly 50 million prior authorization determinations, compared to fewer than 400,000 in Traditional FFS.² For rural patients, these requirements can mean delays in medically necessary treatment, the need for multiple long-distance trips to see specialists, or even abandonment of care altogether. Such delays often result in worsening of chronic conditions, avoidable hospitalizations, or permanent decline in health that could have been prevented with timely intervention. These delays not only compromise health outcomes but also undermine patients' independence and quality of life, forcing some to live with unmanaged pain or prolonged uncertainty about their diagnosis or treatment while simultaneously driving up higher overall healthcare costs.

¹ See [Key Facts About Medicare Beneficiaries in Rural Areas | KFF](#)
² See [Medicare Advantage Insurers Made Nearly 50 Million Prior Authorization Determinations in 2023 | KFF](#)

MHLG | MENTAL HEALTH LIAISON GROUP MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION ADVOCATES ADVOCATING POLICY, LEADING CHANGE

December 9, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
 Speaker of the House
 H-232, The Capitol
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
 House Minority Leader
 H-204, The Capitol
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
 Senate Majority Leader
 S-230, The Capitol
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
 House Minority Leader
 S-221, The Capitol
 Washington, DC 20515

RE: MHLG Urges Passage of the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act (S. 1816/H.R. 3514).

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leaders Thune, Jeffries, and Schumer,

On behalf of the undersigned members of the Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG), a coalition of national organizations representing consumers, family members, mental health and substance use providers, advocates, and payers committed to advancing access to mental health and substance use care, we write to express our strong support for and endorsement of the *Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act* (S. 1816/H.R. 3514). This bipartisan legislation will help ensure that older adults can access the timely mental health and substance use treatment they need by streamlining prior authorization processes in Medicare Advantage.

In 2022, an estimated one in eight older adults experienced a mental illness and one in 11 had a substance use disorder.¹ Despite the widespread prevalence of mental health and substance use disorders among older adults, this population faces heightened risks due to factors such as the loss of loved ones, loneliness, and social isolation, chronic illness or disability, and the stress associated with caregiving. Furthermore, barriers such as stigma, financial constraints, limited transportation, and challenges navigating the health care system can make it difficult for older adults to access the care they need.

Prior authorization use has been historically higher in Medicare Advantage than in Traditional Fee-for-Service (FFS) Medicare. In 2023, Medicare Advantage insurers made nearly 50 million prior authorization determinations, compared to fewer than 400,000 in Traditional FFS.² Prior authorization requirements can create significant barriers to timely mental health and substance use treatment, leading to delayed care, interrupted treatment continuity, or patients forgoing care altogether. Such delays can result in worsening symptoms, increased risk of crisis or hospitalization, and greater strain on families and

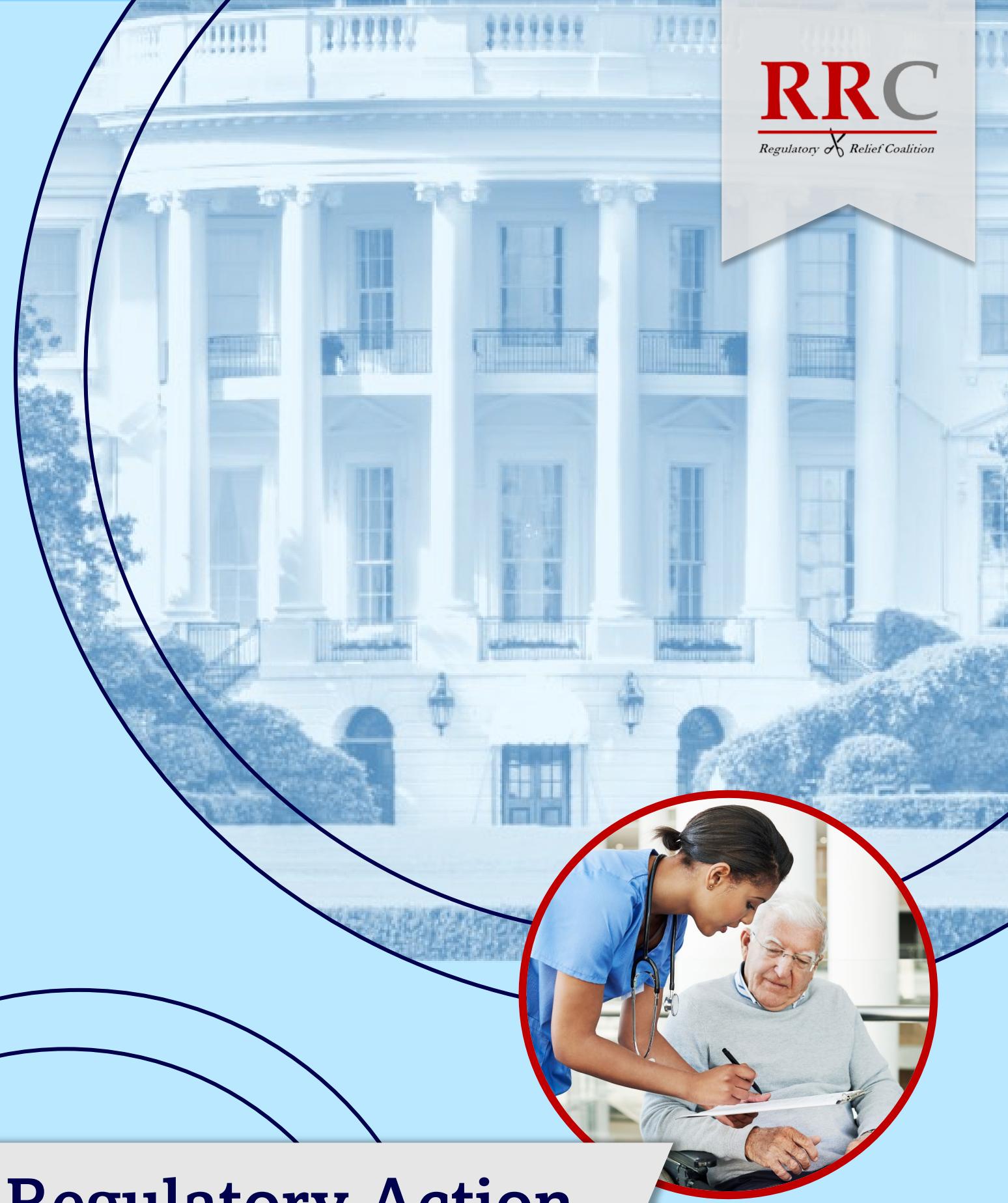
¹ See [Behavioral Health among Older Adults: Results from the 2021 and 2022 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health](#)
² See [Medicare Advantage Insurers Made Nearly 50 Million Prior Authorization Determinations in 2023 | KFF](#)

1400 K STREET, SUITE 400 | WASHINGTON, DC 20005 [WWW.MHLG.ORG](#)

Leading national rural health organizations sent a letter of support for the *Seniors' Act* on December 3.

The Mental Health Liaison Group (MHLG) sent a letter of support for passage of the *Seniors' Act* on December 9.





Regulatory Action

2025 Regulatory & White House Efforts

CMS CY 2026 MA PROPOSED RULE

RRC supported and provided comments on CMS' CY 2026 MA Proposed Rule, which included several provisions related to prior authorization, provider directories, MA plans' internal coverage criteria policies, and the Medicare Loss Ratio.

RRC RESPONSE TO WHITE HOUSE INSURER ENGAGEMENT

In response to the July AHIP Consensus Statement on reducing and streamlining prior authorizations, RRC issued a press release calling for these reforms to be codified through passage of the *Seniors' Act*. RRC emphasized that voluntary commitments from the insurance industry do not guarantee relief and highlighted that the commitment mirrors reforms RRC has long advocated for, as well as protections finalized by CMS in 2024.

CMMI WISER MODEL

RRC submitted a letter to CMS expressing significant concerns about the WISER Model in the Medicare FFS program. In the letter, RRC argued that the proposed payment model would likely lead to delays in beneficiary access to timely care and increase administrative burden for physicians. RRC urged CMS to reconsider implementation and instead focus on reforming and streamlining prior authorization requirements to eliminate existing barriers to the delivery of medically necessary services.

RRC OUTREACH TO ADMINISTRATOR OZ

RRC submitted a letter to CMS commending Administrator Oz for his leadership in advocating for greater insurer transparency and accountability in the Medicare Advantage prior authorization process. On December 16, RRC held a meeting with Rujul Desai, Senior Counselor to the Administrator at CMS. RRC is engaging next with the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC).





Public Engagement

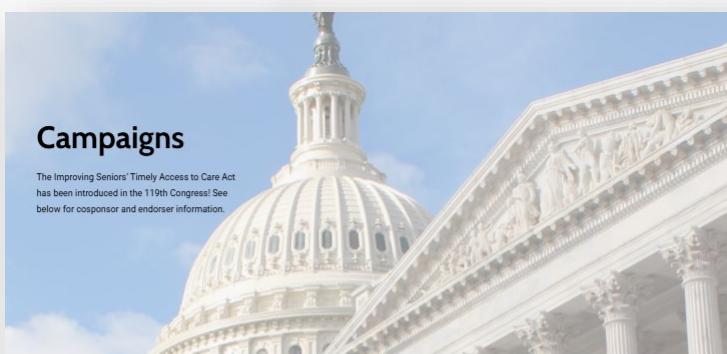
Public Engagement Highlights | 2025

RRC was frequently quoted in DC area publications and published additional press releases to highlight advancements in PA reform. RRC also presented at 6 organizational events.

JAN - APRIL	RRC prepares social media content in preparation for bill introduction, co-sponsorship, and passage.
MAY	RRC distributes press release on introduction of the <i>Seniors' Act</i> with massive House, Senate, and stakeholder group support. RRC executes grassroots and social media to encourage support.
JUNE	RRC publishes an updated <i>Seniors' Act</i> fact sheet.
JUNE	RRC launches "What physicians are saying" campaign highlighting physician quotes from RRC member organizations.
JUNE	RRC distributes press release calling for passage of the <i>Seniors' Act</i> following AHIP Consensus Statement to reduce PA.
JULY	Active engagement on social media through "Thank you" posts to champions and cosponsors of the <i>Seniors' Act</i> .
SEPT	RRC drafts Quorum grassroots campaign for member use.
SEPT- NOV	RRC launches "Did You Know" Campaign and "Myth Vs Fact" Campaign to educate the public on issues with prior authorization.
DEC	RRC launches #PassTheSeniorsAct week on X (formerly known as Twitter) to rally support for passage.

Website

RRC continues to deliver the latest coalition and prior authorization-related news through its website following a comprehensive redesign in 2024. The website includes a real-time tracker of cosponsors and endorsing organizations and is routinely used by Hill staff, media, and endorsers as the key resource for all information about the legislation and coalition.



Campaigns

The Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act has been introduced in the 119th Congress! See below for cosponsor and endorser information.

119th Congress

The Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act S. 1816/H.R. 3514

Modest changes to **update timelines, ensure drafting consistency, and clarify regulatory authority** should pave the way to committee and floor action in the 119th Congress.

The bill received a **preliminary CBO score of zero** in October 2024.

64
Cosponsors

242
Cosponsors

300+
Endorsing Organizations

[See Senate Cosponsors](#)

[See House Cosponsors](#)

[See Endorsement List](#)

The Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act (S. 1816 / H.R. 3514)

List of Supporting Organizations (as of December 15, 2025)

National Organizations

1. AARP
2. Adventist Health Policy Association
3. Alliance for Headache Disorders Advocacy
4. Alliance for Patient Access
5. Alliance for Physical Therapy Quality and Innovation
6. Alliance of Specialty Medicine
7. Alzheimer's Association
8. Alzheimer's Impact Movement
9. Ambulatory Surgery Center Association
10. American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
11. American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine
12. American Academy of Emergency Medicine
13. American Academy of Family Physicians
14. American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
15. American Academy of Neurology
16. American Academy of Ophthalmology
17. American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
18. American Academy of Sleep Medicine
19. American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
20. American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology & Strabismus
21. American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
22. American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
23. American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons
24. American Association of Neurological Surgeons
25. American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine
26. American Association of Ophthalmic Oncologists
27. American Association of Orthopaedic Executives
28. American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
29. American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists
30. American Association on Health and Disability
31. American Case Management Association
32. American Clinical Laboratory Association
33. American Clinical Neurophysiology Society
34. American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
35. American College of Cardiology
36. American College of Chest Physicians
37. American College of Emergency Physicians
38. American College of Gastroenterology
39. American College of Mohs Surgery
40. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
41. American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
42. American College of Osteopathic Internists
43. American College of Physicians

Top Social Media Campaigns

Establishing Transparency

The Seniors' Act would require transparency from Medicare Advantage about prior authorization practices including:

- ✓ Health care services requiring prior authorization
- ✓ Denials issued
- ✓ Number of appeals and denials of appeals
- ✓ Average time to respond to a submission
- ✓ How plans use AI/machine learning in denials

RRC

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION MYTH VS. FACT

MYTH: Prior authorization only causes minor delays in care that does not effect patients.

FACT: Prior authorization delays can be dangerous. 1 in 3 physicians report that prior authorization delays led to a serious adverse health event, including hospitalization or death.

Information from 2024 AMA survey.

RRC
Regulatory Relief Coalition

DID YOU KNOW?

- 89% of physicians report that prior authorization somewhat or significantly increases physician burnout
Information from 2024 American Medical Association (AMA) survey.
<https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/prior-authorization-survey.pdf>
- The *Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act* will establish an electronic prior authorization program ("e-PA") for Medicare Advantage plans
- Electronic prior authorization will reduce the burden for physicians by simplifying workflow and standardizing requirements, reducing delays and denials for patients

WWW.REGRELIEF.ORG
REGULATORY RELIEF COALITION

RRC

BILL INFOGRAPHIC CAMPAIGN | SUMMER 2025

RRC developed a series of graphics highlighting key provisions of the *Seniors' Act* to build support for cosponsorship, endorsement, and passage.

MYTH VS FACT CAMPAIGN | FALL 2025

RRC generated a series of myth vs. fact graphics to dispel common insurer talking points about the use of prior authorization.

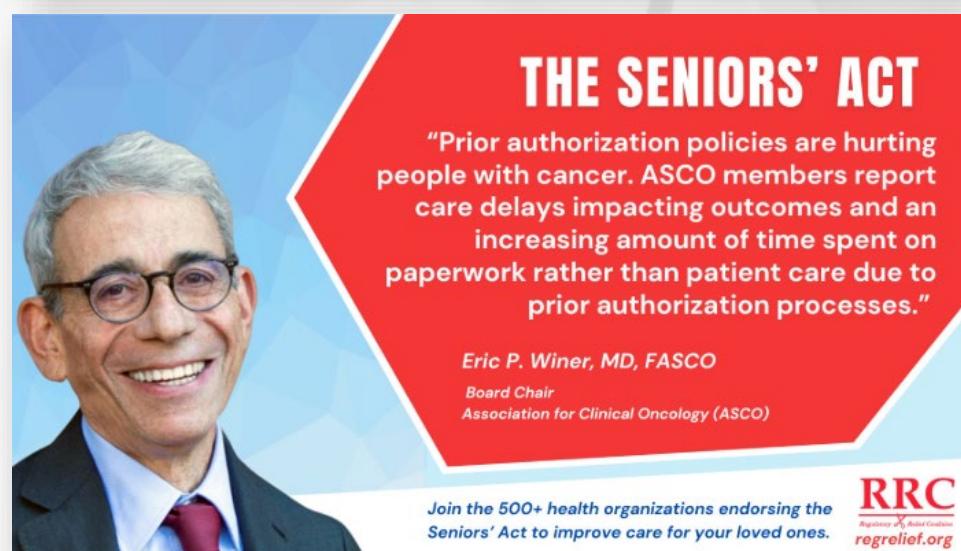
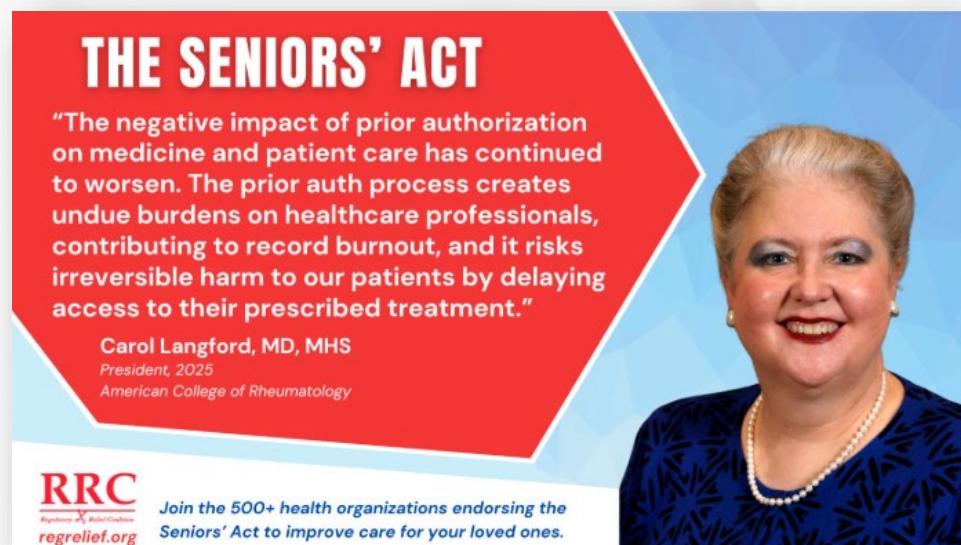
#DIDYOUKNOW CAMPAIGN | FALL 2025

RRC emphasized the burden of prior authorization through its #DidYouKnow graphics and underscored why passage of the *Seniors' Act* is a necessary solution.

What Physicians Are Saying

PHYSICIAN QUOTE CAMPAIGN | SUMMER 2025

RRC created a series of graphics that features physicians from RRC member organizations speaking to the burden of PA in their medical practices, collecting dozens of key quotes for use by lawmakers and the media.



Looking Ahead to 2026

2026 RRC AGENDA

RRC LEADING THE WAY TO THE FUTURE OF PA & MA POLICY REFORM

Passing the *Seniors' Act* is the logical next step for this Congress, to ensure codification of the important policies in bipartisan legislation. RRC is in active communication with committees of jurisdiction, CMS, and the White House.

Driving investigations of other MA plan abuses that deny and delay care for patients, such as post-service payment denials, recoupments, & PA repeals processes.

Expanding the work of RRC beyond MA. The *Seniors' Act* has already encouraged look-alike legislation including applying electronic prior authorization and transparency policies to commercial plans.

Driving force poised to respond to CMS proposed rules related to MA and PA. Will fight to protect e-PA and MA final rules establishing PA protections for beneficiaries and implementing and enforcing the new PA provisions at CMS.

Championing legislation that expands protections in the *Seniors' Act* to prescription drugs in MA, Medicare Part D, and other payors.

Well positioned to educate and lead policymakers on developing policies on Artificial Intelligence (AI), a key issue in 2026 and beyond.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank RRC members and allies for your continued support in our coalition's efforts to reduce delays and denials in care for patients.



CONTACT US

www.regrelief.org
Follow us on X/Twitter
@RegRelief

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