



Coalition of Wisconsin Aging & Health Groups

Financial Empowerment – Personal Advocacy – Victim Rights

The Coalition of Wisconsin Aging and Health Groups is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, statewide membership organization that was founded in 1977.

“Advocating for all Generations”

4/17/19

Testimony in support of AB 24 and SB 26

Good morning Chair Testin, Chair Sanfelippo, and members of the Committees. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today, I’m Rob Gundermann, Executive Director of the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging and Health Groups speaking in favor of AB 24 and SB 26.

The provision in the bills that means the most to my organization is the one creating a timeframe for the appeals process. I’m referring to the language that provides an answer to an exemption request within three business days or in exigent circumstances, one day. This is important to us because many of the people we represent are taking multiple medications to address a variety of ailments and illnesses and this provision will mean a great deal to them.

Often, when we look at Step Therapy or other types of prior authorizations, we are looking at one specific medication because the request for an exception is usually for one specific medication but it’s often much more complicated.

Let me just give you an example: Patient John Doe has lived with epilepsy for his whole life but has been successfully medicated and hasn’t had an event for many years. A few years ago, he was diagnosed with arthritis and most recently he was diagnosed as having moderate dementia. Like many people diagnosed with dementia, John develops depression and begins having bouts of delirium and has to be medicated for this as well. His blood pressure is high so he’s on medication to lower that and his cholesterol is high so he’s on a medication to lower his cholesterol too. At this point John Doe is taking prescription medications to treat seven conditions and that doesn’t include any over the counter medications he’s taking. Now John gets something new, he develops pneumonia, or shingles, or something else and the physician needs to introduce a new medication. This is one of those times when an exemption to the Step Therapy protocol can be critical, when the physician is adding a new medication to a cocktail of drugs already cycling through the patient.

When someone is on a host of different medications to treat different ailments, managing the interactions between drugs can become very tricky and when a physician is adding in a new medication to this drug cocktail they have a lot to consider in terms of how that new medication interacts with what the patient is already taking. These bills will help patients in situations like this by speeding up the exemption process and preventing delays in obtaining the medications they need.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I’m happy to try to answer any questions.