



Kentucky Medical Association
Physicians Caring for Kentucky

House Bill 176 – Prior Authorization Reform

What HB176 Means For Kentucky Physicians and Patients

Kentucky’s physician community achieved a significant policy breakthrough this year with the enactment of House Bill 176, the result of years of deliberate and coordinated advocacy. Led by the Kentucky Medical Association, physicians across the Commonwealth remained consistently engaged—communicating with legislators, sharing real-world examples from their practices, and reinforcing the need for reform. That sustained effort ultimately translated into legislative success, demonstrating the influence of an organized and unified physician voice.

For many practices, prior authorization has evolved from a utilization tool into a persistent operational challenge, often interfering with timely patient care and placing additional strain on already burdened clinical teams. Patients have experienced these challenges firsthand, with delays and uncertainty becoming an all-too-common part of the care process. HB 176 reflects a recognition by policymakers that reform was necessary, and the new law begins to address these concerns by creating a pathway for more efficient care delivery while maintaining appropriate oversight.

Key components of the legislation include:

- **Prior Authorization Exemption (“Gold Carding”) Program:** Physicians who achieve at least a 93 percent approval rate for a given service or procedure and meet any other insurer criteria will qualify for an exemption from prior authorization requirements for that service. This approach reduces repetitive administrative hurdles and allows high-performing physicians to deliver care more efficiently while continuing to support evidence-based decision-making.
- **Enhanced Reporting and Transparency:** The legislation requires insurers and the state Medicaid program to report data on prior authorization requests, approvals, denials, and response times. It also mandates reporting on the performance and utilization of exemption programs, providing lawmakers and stakeholders with greater insight into prior authorization trends and helping inform future policy decisions.

Although key elements of the law will be phased in over time, HB 176 represents meaningful progress toward reducing unnecessary administrative friction and improving the overall care experience. Just as importantly, it reinforces what can be accomplished when physicians remain engaged in the policymaking process and continue to advocate for practical, patient-centered solutions.

Members seeking a deeper dive into the specifics of HB 176 and upcoming implementation details can find a resource with specific bill details below.