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**Leading Advocates Applaud *Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act* Reintroduction**

Coalition Calls on Senate & House to Swiftly Pass Widely Supported, Zero Cost Legislation

**Washington, DC**—Today, the Regulatory Relief Coalition ([RRC](#)), a group of national physician specialty organizations, announced its strong support for the *Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care (Seniors')* Act, legislation introduced today in Congress by Senators **Roger Marshall, MD (R-KS)** and **Mark Warner (D-VA)**, and by Representatives **Mike Kelly (R-PA)**, **Suzan DelBene (D-WA)**, **Ami Bera, MD (D-CA)**, and **John Joyce, MD (R-PA)**.

The Seniors' Act is bipartisan legislation that will tackle the overuse and abuse of prior authorization (PA) by some Medicare Advantage (MA) plans that is threatening access to patient care and increases provider administrative burden.

The bipartisan legislation was introduced with 47 senators and 73 representatives as original co-sponsors. Over 140 organizations representing patients, health care providers, the medical technology and biopharmaceutical industry, health plans and others endorse the legislation. The RRC urges Congress to act swiftly to enact this legislation into law this year considering its overwhelming support from hundreds of stakeholders and policymakers for many years.

"Strengthening oversight of prior authorization in Medicare Advantage ensures the program delivers on its promise of timely care for America's seniors," said **Alexander A. Khalessi, MD, MBA, Chair of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and Congress of Neurological Surgeons Washington Committee**. "Today, patients with urgent neurologic conditions face delays and denials that risk permanent disability or worse. We thank the House and Senate champions for their continued bipartisan leadership to ensure that medical urgency, not administrative process, guides access to care. Congress has the opportunity to deliver a meaningful victory for seniors by swiftly sending this legislation to the president's desk. Let's allow surgeons to focus on their patients."

The bill would codify and enhance elements of the Advancing Interoperability and Improving Prior Authorization Processes (e-PA) [rule](#) that was finalized by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on January 17, 2024. Last Congress, the bill was supported by a super majority of members in the Senate ([60](#)), a majority in the House ([232](#)), and unanimously passed [the House](#) in 2022.

While CBO scoring prevented the bill's passage in the 117<sup>th</sup>, CMS finalized rules that implemented major provisions of the bill in January 2024, reducing the score significantly. [The 118th Congress House and](#)

[Senate bills](#), made further, modest changes to the legislation to further reduce the score, and successfully achieved a preliminary CBO score of **ZERO** in October 2024.

“This commonsense legislation must be passed,” said **Michael Repka, MD, President of the American Academy of Ophthalmology**. “Prior authorization creates unnecessary barriers to medically necessary care, ultimately harming patients. A recent report from the Kaiser Family Foundation revealed that more than 80% of denied prior authorization requests were overturned on appeal, clear evidence that reform is needed. This is the year for Congress to act and get this vital bill across the finish line.”

In short, the Seniors’ Act would:

- Establish an electronic prior authorization process for MA plans, including a standardization for transactions and clinical attachments.
- Increase transparency around MA prior authorization requirements and their use.
- Provide a pathway for CMS to institute real-time decisions for routinely approved items and services in the future and 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 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies to report to Congress on program integrity efforts and other ways to improve the e-PA process.

The RRC is a lead architect and advocate for reforming PA in the MA program on behalf of the more than 34 million seniors enrolled in MA plans and the providers who care for them.

RRC Member Organizations: the American Academy of Dermatology Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Neurology, American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, American Association of Neurological Surgeons, American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons, American College of Cardiology, American College of Rheumatology, American College of Surgeons, American Gastroenterological Association, American Osteopathic Association, American Society of Clinical Oncology, Congress of Neurological Surgeons, Heart Rhythm Advocates, Medical Group Management Association, National Association of Spine Specialists, and the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography & Interventions. RRC Allies: Premier Inc and the National Association for Proton Therapy.

More information about the RRC and the legislation is available at [www.regrelief.org](http://www.regrelief.org).

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