

Medication Prior-Authorization Requests Psychiatry

The Problem

Health plans often require a Prior Authorization (PA) before a psychiatrist can prescribe certain medications. Submitting PAs currently requires the psychiatrist to perform several time-consuming administrative steps, including:

- Identify the correct pharmacy contact line associated with the patient's health plan
- Call the pharmacy contact line to request the PA form, which often entails multiple automated phone prompts, long hold times, and delays when selecting the incorrect prompts
- Complete the demographic portion of the PA, including items that the psychiatrist may not know (i.e., patient health insurance ID number)
- Fax the completed PA
- Track whether it has been approved or denied

Aim/Goal

- To minimize time spent by physicians on administrative tasks, allowing them more time to focus on clinical issues
- To eliminate the need to search for pharmacy contact information
- To eliminate delays in health plan responses to PAs due to the submission of incorrect demographic information

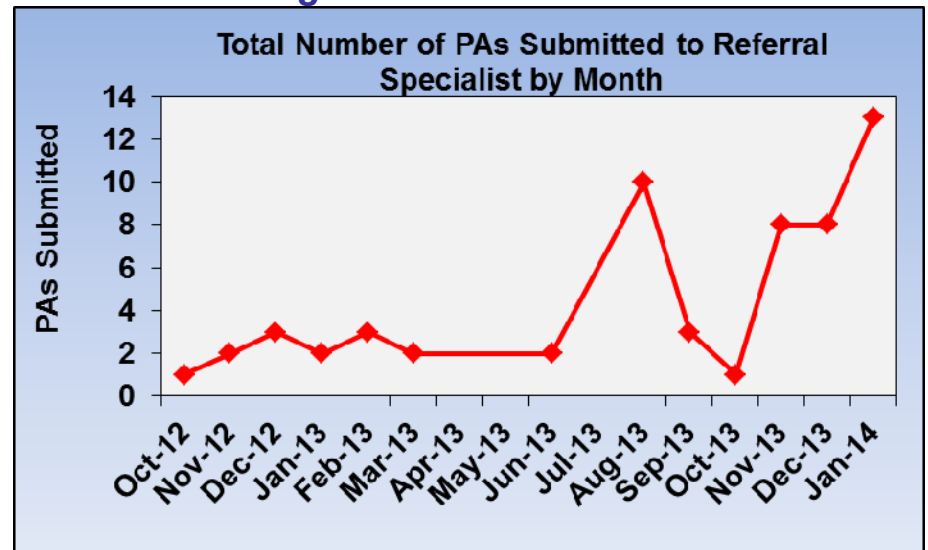
The Team

- Sandi Leitao, CAO
- Sherene Blake, Practice Administrator
- Jounathan Paulsaint, Referral Specialist
- Pam Peck, PsyD., Clinic Director

The Interventions

- The Referral Specialist (RS) receives requests for PAs from psychiatrists by e-mail or in RS's mailbox. Patient and pharmacy requests for PAs are transferred from the front desk staff or psychiatrist to RS.
- An Excel Spreadsheet is used to enter data about each PA, including the psychiatrist requesting PA, patient name and MRN, medication name and dosage, health plan, pharmacy vendor, pharmacy contact line, and weblinks to PA forms.
- The Referral Specialist uses the spreadsheet to track the number of requests by health plan, medication, and psychiatrist.

The Results/Progress to Date



Lessons Learned

- An insurance company may have multiple health plans, each with a different vendor, making it more difficult to identify the correct pharmacy contact line when requesting and submitting PAs
- When a patient's pharmacy requests a PA to fill a medication they often do not provide the correct number to the psychiatrist or RS to obtain the PA form
- The psychiatrists appreciate the administrative support that allows them to focus on their clinical tasks

Next Steps/What Should Happen Next

- Create a Microsoft Access database to collect data on PA requests and submissions, including information to track approval periods, denials and reasons for denials, and appeals; and to identify proactively when PAs need to be re-submitted
- Identify more effective and efficient ways to track and update the requesting psychiatrist on PA submission, approval, denial and appeals
- Maintain a database of direct pharmacy contact lines, which often result in faster authorization, especially for urgent patient requests