

Dear Committee members:

I retired 2 years ago after 40 years of practice as an adult primary care physician. I could share with you what the practice of medicine was like in 1975, but will instead share with you an example of why my peers (and my own personal physician) are retiring prematurely. The example of a bureaucratic irritant that I am going to share with you is the requirement of yearly prior authorizations for schedule 5 biologic drugs that treat life threatening hereditary illnesses that are permanent until the patient dies. My wife has familial hypercholesterolemia that caused her to have a "sudden cardiac arrest" at age 54. She survived only because this occurred in a gym next to 3 MD's and in a gym that had an AED. After bypass surgery at Stanford (quite similar to President Clinton's) and a subsequent stent placement, her ASCVD continued to progress in spite of total lifestyle compliance and maximal drug therapy. Her LDL was 489! Probably following years of government funded basic research, the new biologic cholesterol drugs were released. The prior authorization to get partial insurance coverage for this drug took untold hours by us and her very generous cardiologist! We were fortunate to be able to pay the \$528/month co-payment. Her LDL dropped to 44 and we are hopeful that her future is changed with less likelihood of sudden death or more expensive procedures/surgeries. The point of this is: the condition is genetically caused and permanent until death, the drug has been shown to work, and yearly mandatory prior authorizations makes NO SENSE! The requirement only wastes the cardiologist's time and makes it more likely that he also will retire prematurely. The mountain of absurd bureaucratic tasks such as this is damaging the quality of healthcare and eroding the physician workforce in a dramatic way. Please review this policy that the insurance companies blame on YOU! Please also preserve our healthcare workforce by purging it of nonsensical policies that waste time and cause our best physicians to retire prematurely. Also consider the many patients who don't have the ability to navigate through the numerous barriers in the healthcare/insurance system and simply, quietly give up and suffer and/or die unnecessarily. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Richard A. Munger, M.D.