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November 15, 2021

The Honorable Bryan Steil
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Steil,

On behalf of our over 140 member hospitals and integrated health systems, the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) asks for your support for the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act of 2021, H.R. 3173.

This bipartisan legislation establishes important standardization and transparency regarding the prior authorization practices of health insurers offering Medicare Advantage Plans. Specifically, the bill would require Medicare Advantage Plans to:

- (1) Establish an electronic prior authorization program that meets specified standards, including the ability to provide real-time decisions in response to requests for items and services that are routinely approved;
- (2) Annually publish specified prior authorization information, including the percentage of requests approved and the average response time; and
- (3) Meet other standards, as set by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, relating to the quality and timeliness of prior authorization determinations.

Insurer prior authorization practices are an increasingly significant source of frustration for Wisconsin health care providers and patients, and are resulting in unreasonably delayed or denied care, unnecessary administrative burden on Wisconsin clinicians, and additional waste in the health care system. Wisconsin hospitals and health systems strongly support the standardization and transparency requirements in the bipartisan Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act of 2021.

Leveraging existing information technology and electronic health record investments already made by health care providers, the process improvements in the bill will help ensure prior authorization processes are appropriate, timely, and consistent. The reforms in this legislation will help Wisconsin clinicians reduce unnecessary wait times and health insurance bureaucracy for Wisconsin patients. They will also allow clinicians to focus more time on patient care and less time on burdensome paperwork.

As Wisconsin and the nation's health care system faces significant and growing health care workforce shortage challenges, public policy such as H.R. 3173 that removes unnecessary administrative tasks from clinicians' daily work is an increasingly important tool to help Wisconsin's health care providers continue to meet our communities' health care needs.

WHA thanks you for your focus on this important issue and we look forward to working with you to make improvements to the prior authorization process to ensure patient access to care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Eric Borgerding'.

Eric Borgerding
President and CEO