

Submit Prior Authorization Requests Electronically to Quickly Identify Applicable Coverage Criteria for Pharmacy Benefit Drugs



What is electronic prior authorization (ePA)?

Prior authorization (PA) is a cost-control process that requires health care providers to obtain advance approval from the health plan before a pharmacy benefit drug qualifies for payment.

Electronic prior authorization, or ePA, describes a simple and secure process that enables your office to complete PA requests online.

Submitting PAs electronically via integrated electronic health record (EHR) ePA tools or online ePA portals helps your patients get their medications faster compared to phone and fax methods.

ePA portals provide real-time insight into member benefit configurations and drug coverage requirements.

The problem:

A 2024 survey by the American Medical Association (AMA) found the majority of physician respondents (610 out of 1,000 surveyed, 61%) reported challenges determining when a prescription drug required a PA.¹

Member-specific variation in pharmacy benefit coverage also poses a barrier to the PA process when requests are submitted via fax or telephonic methods.

The solution:

ePA portals with real-time pharmacy benefit check (RTPBC) technology offer providers and administrators with the following insights directly from the individual member's benefit:

- PA requirements
- Patient anticipated out-of-pocket costs
- Covered preferred formulary alternatives

Identifying pharmacy benefit details via RTPBC enables timely discussions about clinically appropriate and affordable medications, which can increase the likelihood of patient adherence to their therapy.

How can providers access ePA platforms at no cost?

Some electronic health record (EHR) systems may have integrated ePA tools that allow you to proactively initiate the PA request directly from your EHR at the time of prescribing to save time, rather than waiting for a claim rejection from the pharmacy before initiating the PA request.

If you don't have access to an integrated ePA portal within your EHR, you can alternatively use ePA portals available online at no cost*.

Examples of free online ePA portals, which also have EHR integration capabilities**:

- [CoverMyMeds®](#)
- [SureScripts®](#)

Did you know?

A study conducted by CoverMyMeds found that patients receive their medications **13.2 days sooner** when their prescribers submit PA requests through ePA tools integrated in their EHR prescribing workflow.²

Resources for Providers:

Use e-referral to find additional ePA resources for pharmacy and medical benefit drug coverage requests:

- Blue Cross members:
 - Pharmacy benefit drugs
 - Medical benefit drugs
- BCN members:
 - Pharmacy benefit drugs
 - Medical benefit drugs

Questions? Call the Pharmacy Help Desk at 1-800-437-3803.

Footnotes:

*BCBSM does not own the content on this external site.

**Applicable access and feature capabilities dependent upon the health system's EHR platform.

References:

1. 2024 AMA prior authorization physician survey. AMA. Accessed February 24, 2025.
<https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/prior-authorization-survey.pdf>
2. Integrated ePA: Accelerate time to treatment. CoverMyMeds. Accessed February 26, 2025.
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