

December 12th, 2002

Dear Senator George and Representative Leibham,

I am the mother of an 11 year-old girl with severe physical involvement. I have many concerns regarding the Prior Authorization process for therapy, but let me share with you a few key points and related questions.

1. In the past 10 years since Lindsay began receiving therapy, she has only been denied once. That denial was overturned on appeal. However, the amount of time and effort that myself, my daughter's providers and the State of Wisconsin has put into approving those services is appalling to me. Papers shuffled back and forth for 6 weeks or more is not uncommon to justify a brief 3-month approval period. The cost to the state and to my provider for this process has got to be very high and in no way has this process improved the quality or outcomes of my daughter's care. How can the state contain Medicaid costs when so much money is spent with this process?
2. Without a medical breakthrough or miracle, Lindsay is going to require some type of therapy for the rest of her life. That is something that every doctor she sees will tell you for a *certainty*. Yet, we are required to go through the prior authorization process every 3 to 6 months. I understand that there are rules in place that allow prior authorizations to last 6 months to one year. These rules make sense! Why aren't they applied?
3. Finally, I can not imagine a situation where therapy is more medically required than it is for Lindsay. Yet, the current definition of Medical Necessity does not provide for long term therapy services for a child like Lindsay. The definition and related rules and systems focus on management of short-term acute problems NOT children & adults with disabilities! We need a better definition in Wisconsin that clearly outlines appropriate care for medical issues and individuals with disabilities issues. Why can't we update our definition so that it makes more sense for everyone?

In conclusion, the Prior Authorization process is inefficient, redundant and serves no one well. Please consider looking at both the frequency of the process for children with disabilities and the definition that it is based on. Both of these issues need IMMEDIATE attention and improvement! Thank you for your time and effort in rectifying this very important situation.

Sincerely,

Lori