

# Prior Authorization for Medication-Assisted Treatment

Health insurers utilize practices – such as “prior authorization” – that delay or deny access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD).



## What is MAT?

- MAT is the use of FDA-approved medications, commonly in combination with counseling and other behavioral therapies, to provide a comprehensive approach to the treatment of substance use disorders, including OUD. FDA-approved medications used to treat OUD include methadone, buprenorphine, buprenorphine-naloxone combination, and naltrexone.

## What is “Prior Authorization for MAT” and how does it impact Kentuckians?

- Prior authorization (PA) for MAT services is a complex cost-control mechanism used by health insurers that requires patients to await approval before gaining access to a drug. PAs for MAT are common and often take days or weeks to get approved.
- Providers are routinely stymied by PA requirements at the critical moment when patients are ready to begin treatment and address their OUD.
- A large percentage of patients with private health insurance are forced to go through burdensome PAs prior to receiving MAT – putting them at serious risk for relapse, overdose, or even death.

## How will this legislation address this growing problem for Kentuckians?

- The legislation states that medications prescribed to treat opioid use disorder, specifically those that contain methadone, buprenorphine, and naltrexone, should not be subject to PA requirements.

## Why is it critical to pass this legislation in 2020?

- Since 2010, Kentucky has expanded Medicaid, reduced opioid prescriptions, increased use of the state prescription drug monitoring program, and increased access to naloxone. But treatment services for OUD is lagging – Kentucky can do more.
- This legislation will assist the percentage of patients in Kentucky that need MAT services and ensure swifter access to effective treatments.
- This legislation will help increase the percentage of publicly funded treatment programs that report offering FDA-approved medications to treat substance use disorders.
- This legislation will reduce administrative burdens for physicians and help grow the number of physicians who prescribe FDA-approved medication within private-sector treatment programs.
- This legislation will remove unnecessary roadblocks that delay potentially life-saving care, stifle recovery, and increase costs for individuals with opioid use disorder.
- Passage of this legislation will help save lives.

**Support this legislation to eliminate prior authorization for MAT opioid addiction treatment!**

