



U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.)
Insurance Prior Authorization Floor Speech
June 9, 2026

Mr. President, I rise to call attention to a serious barrier in our healthcare system – one that hinders too many Americans from accessing the medications and treatments they need.

Across the country, patients and providers alike are increasingly frustrated by prior authorization requirements imposed by insurance companies. Too often, these requirements override the medical judgement of doctors who know their patients best.

I have had oncologists, cardiologists, psychiatrists, and many other medical professionals visit my office to share their ongoing concerns on how prior authorizations are disrupting care. They are trained experts, yet their decisions are being second-guessed by insurers.

The result is deeply concerning.

Many patients are denied or delayed access to the medications and services that their physicians have prescribed because they know those treatments are effective based on their many years of medical education and clinical experience.

And the delays aren't minor. Patients are often forced to wait days, weeks, or even months for critical care, which, in many cases, will still be denied in the end. There are simply too many unnecessary hurdles standing between a patient, doctor, and the care that they need.

I am a proud cosponsor of the "Safe Step Act," which would allow patients to access appropriate treatments more quickly by bypassing dangerous or ineffective "fail first" prior authorization requirements.

I have also cosponsored the “Improving Seniors’ Timely Access to Care Act,” which would modernize and streamline prior authorization for Medicare Advantage Patients.

This “timely access” legislation would deliver real-time decisions for routinely approved treatments, increase transparency around CMS approvals and denials, and replace outdated paper-based systems with electronic prior authorization.

These are practical, bipartisan solutions. In fact, 68 senators have already joined in support of this effort.

Despite that, the issue persists.

We must act with urgency. Every day we delay is another day patients are left waiting for care that they need and deserve. I urge my colleagues and the Administration to prioritize this issue and move swiftly to address it.

Every day we delay is another day that insurance companies will continue making decisions on behalf of medical professionals, which they have no business doing whatsoever.

Thank you, Mr. President, and I yield the floor.