**BUCKS PHILADELPHIA MEDICAL CARE GROUP**

***ANDREW BERKOWITZ, M.D.***

**10745 Haldeman Avenue**

**Philadelphia, PA 19116**

**Phone:**[**(215) 947-6143**](tel:(215)%20947-6143)

**Fax:**[**(215) 947-6274**](tel:(215)%20947-6274)

**Suboxone Prior Authorization Policy**

To our Dear Valued Patients:

Our practice continues to upgrade our quality of care that we provide to our patients. As these advancements take place we will communicate such changes to you. As you may or may not be aware, certain services we render at our practice require a prior authorization. One of these is for Suboxone treatment. For those who are not familiar with what a prior authorization is, it is a process set by which your insurance company (who quite honestly would rather not pay for the item requested). Perhaps my characterization of their intentions is not 100% correct but it sure as heck isn't 100% wrong. With this goal in mind, they require the doctor’s office to go through a lengthy and arduous process to explain to them why it is “medically necessary” for you to receive such thing. In all fairness, if we do a great job justifying

it they will "do the right thing" 80% of the time and approve it-- obviously, some insurance companies are better than others. Additionally, I feel that insurance companies have a bias against people who have addiction problems and are LESS inclined to provide the needed treatments for this disease then they would for people who have (in their narrow thinking more real or legitimate diseases/problems) hypertension, diabetes or cancer.

To save money, insurance companies make this process unnecessarily complicated to give a profound disincentive to our ordering expensive appropriate testing. we've found the worse the insurance, the more expensive the test, the more time consuming and the more complicated the procedure.

Once your insurance company approves the prior authorization, they will provide our office with a unique identifier/confirmation number, which is also forward to the pharmacy you are attempting to fill your prescription at. Because the prior authorization process is quite time consuming, and since we're not

your primary physician but a specialist, our office requests that should you want us to do the precertification you pay us a nominal amount of money (**$20)** to carry out this process **(it is our office policy to do the first Suboxone preauthorization) for free.**

Please understand that this is not a guarantee of approval for the prior authorization. Some insurance companies will NOT do the right thing and we have ZERO leverage to force them to. Some insurance companies are basically saying-- don't confuse me with the facts, our minds are made up. Rest assured that if we suggest that Suboxone treatment is indeed recommended, it is indicated and appropriate. If the insurance company says it isn't then-- shame on them. The top ten healthcare CEOs all made 10 million or more for 2016-- the top being 22 million. Now you know where your premiums are going.

As mentioned on several occasions previously, it is not in your insurance company’s best financial interest to approve the diagnostic test as it increases their expenses. With that being said, our office will do what it takes to get the necessary authorization, as we care about our patients and will do what it takes to see them receive their necessary medication (our office’s track record for prior authorization approvals is over 86%).

Upon submitting your prescription to the pharmacy, the pharmacist will should notify you if you require a prior authorization. If this is the case notify us immediately. We will then process the authorization expeditiously. We will send you a text message once we complete our part of the process. You can expect a text from us within 2-24hrs from the time you notify us that a prior authorization is needed. Having received our text, the ball is no longer in our court. The text will signal that we have done our part

and you will now need to work with your insurance company to ensure your receiving your Suboxone that you are rightfully entitled to. It is possible that the insurance company will process their part quickly and efficiently and thus not require your following up with them and the reverse is also possible which means you will need to call them frequently and be quite assertive when you do call to ensure your obtaining the medication. Calling us after you receive our text will be helpful to NO one. Call them!!

Should you wish to discuss anything pertaining to your prior authorization, I ask that you direct your questions to Dr. Randy Phillips (Director and lead Physician for Quality Assurance and Medical Care). You can discuss it with him at the time of your visit or at another time should you have further questions about the process. Feel free to call him at 215-947-6143.

Keep it in mind that once your prior authorization is approved, it is only valid for a certain period of time and will require re-approval once expired.  This unfortunately is just another tactic by your insurance company to limit their expenses.  Be well.

Your eternal friend.

**Andrew Berkowitz**