

HHS adviser hopes prior authorization reform happens in ‘double-digit months,’ not years

Chris Klomp, top Medicare official, urges doctors to pressure tech vendors to help facilitate change



Chris Klomp is director of the Center for Medicare and a senior counselor at the Department of Health and Human Services. *ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/AFP via Getty Images*

By [Chelsea Cirruzzo](#) – STAT News

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WASHINGTON — A top U.S. health official told a room full of doctors on Wednesday that he hopes the Trump administration's efforts to whittle down the insurance industry's use of prior authorizations will produce results "in double-digit months" instead of years, calling on his audience to also put pressure on their technology vendors to standardize the process.

"There should be no human working on prior authorization, period," Chris Klomp, director of the Center for Medicare, said. "We have the technology to effectuate appropriate clinical care based on your judgment, your decisions, very, very quickly, and that's what we're driving for."

Klomp, who now also serves as a senior counselor at the Department of Health and Human Services, overseeing the department's day-to-day operations, made his comments at the American Medical Association's national advocacy conference in Washington, D.C.

More than 40 health insurers have pledged to work toward meeting the terms of a voluntary agreement they signed with the Trump administration last year to cut down on the number of medical codes requiring prior authorization.

The ballooning of such codes, Klomp said, has broken down trust between providers and patients, who find prior authorization processes to be opaque and detrimental to their care. But he also gave credit to insurers, saying they have been working on cutting down on the use of prior authorizations since the killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson in 2024 focused attention on the issue.

Some insurers have signed previous pledges to reduce the use of prior authorizations, to little avail.

"They do recognize that ultimately they need to approve the vast majority of requests," Klomp said. Under the pledge made to the Trump administration, insurers aim to have standardized submission requirements for electronic prior authorization and the ability to answer

at least 80% of electronic prior authorization approvals in real-time by 2027.

Health secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has said 80% of insurers have promised to cut prior authorization in almost “all of their procedures.” Similarly, Klomp said prior authorization shouldn’t disappear entirely. “If we eliminated all forms of ... prior authorization, we believe we would, nearly overnight, see hundreds of billions of dollars of additional cost,” he warned.

He called on the doctors in the room to “put pressure on your technology vendors” to move faster on allowing more prior authorizations to be worked out in real time.

“We need more trust. And I think the greatest thing that [federal officials] can do is help be an objective marketer of trust. I hope that we are in trust with you,” he said.