



ASPEN TECH  
POLICY HUB

PROJECT



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## Improving Medication Access With Better Prior Authorization

Getting healthcare providers the prior authorization information they need to deliver timely, equitable care

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prior authorization (PA) refers to the process of getting an insurer's approval before a physician provides a treatment, and it can dangerously delay access to medication. Real-time benefit tools (RTBTs), a software product physicians consult before finalizing a prescription, can decrease the burden of PAs. To reduce the harms of the PA process by making RTBTs more usable and reliable, the New York State Department of Health should adopt a regulation to establish the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs Real-Time Prescription Benefit (NCPDP RTPB) Standard as the statewide RTBT standard. Doing so would reduce the negative impacts of PAs and improve the timely delivery of healthcare for millions of New York patients.



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## THE PROBLEM

The PA process often limits patients' access to treatment by either delaying care or denying payment for care. In a [2020 American Medical Association survey](#), 94% of physicians reported that PAs had delayed care to their patients, and 21% of physicians noted that PAs had led to hospitalizations. Existing PA processes – and limited access to PA information at prescription time – increase health inequities among underserved communities, who disproportionately suffer from chronic conditions that require PAs for treatment.



*Prior authorization reinforces health inequities among underserved communities, who disproportionately suffer from chronic conditions that require PAs for treatment.*

## THE SOLUTION

Real-time benefit tools are a software product that can decrease the harms of PAs by giving physicians real-time access to PA information and helping them avoid PAs altogether. The New York State Department of Health (DOH) should enable better patient care by making RTBTs more usable and reliable. The DOH should do this by adopting a regulation to establish the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs Real-Time Prescription Benefit Standard as the statewide RTPB standard. Establishing the NCPDP RTPB standard, a single set of technical specifications that New York insurers must meet when implementing RTBTs, would help ease the burden on physicians and improve patients' access to medication.

*For more information about this proposal, please see: (1) a [policy brief](#) detailing why and how New York State should implement the RTPB standard; and (2) [sample language](#) for a regulation to implement this policy.*

## ABOUT THE HUB

The Aspen Tech Policy Hub is a Bay Area policy incubator, training a new generation of tech policy entrepreneurs. We take tech experts, teach them the policy process, and support them in creating outside-the-box solutions to society's problems.

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