

Summary of streamlining substance use disorder (SUD) authorization and reauthorization processes across all payors

Second Substitute Senate Bill 6228; Section 9; Chapter 366; Laws of 2024

December 1, 2024

Legislative summary

The Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA) is submitting this report to the legislature as required by [Second Substitute Senate Bill \(2SSB\) 6228](#); Section 9.

The Health Care Authority contracted with Comagine Health to assist with meeting the following requirements from the legislation:

- Convening a work group consisting of representatives from the following: HCA, the Office of Insurance Commissioner (OIC), commercial health carriers, Medicaid managed care organizations, and behavioral health agencies that provide inpatient or residential substance use disorder (SUD) treatment services.
- Developing recommendations, through the work group, for streamlining commercial health carrier and Medicaid managed care organization requirements and processes related to the authorization and reauthorization of inpatient or residential SUD treatment.
- Creating a universal format accepted by all health carriers and Medicaid managed care organizations for behavioral health agencies to use for service authorization and reauthorization requests with common data requirements and a standardized form and simplified electronic process.
- Compiling the recommendations of the work group, so HCA can report to the appropriate policy committees of the legislature by December 1, 2024.

Background

Upon the passage of 2SSB 6228, HCA and OIC staff met to discuss the best approach for meeting the requirements described in Section 9. It was mutually agreed that given the timeline, the best approach would be to contract with an external entity that had both work group facilitation and clinical expertise. After reaching out to a few potential contractors that are part of a Health Consulting Contractor Pool, HCA contracted with Comagine Health.

[Comagine Health](#) was tasked with convening the work group and reporting the agreed-upon work products to HCA. To meet the expected results, Comagine Health, in partnership with HCA and OIC, took the following steps:

- Identified work group members through outreach to the Association of Washington Healthcare Plans and outreach to the Association of Alcoholism and Addiction Programs of Washington State (AAP).

- Reviewed existing work completed through the Prior Authorization Administrative Simplification Workgroup (RCW 48.165.030) for applicability and best practice recommendations.
- Scheduled and hosted work group meetings to present information collected, discuss options, and reach consensus on authorization/reauthorization requirements and processes.
- Provided several opportunities for participants to give feedback and ask questions outside the meeting times.

[View a summary of the work group’s recommendations and the SUD treatment authorization form.](#)

Next steps

HCA and OIC will take necessary action to communicate and implement the processes and universal authorization format and any further legislative direction.

Contact

If there are questions about this summary report or implementation of the work group, please contact Substance Use and Overdose Response Supervisor Amy Dura at amy.dura@hca.wa.gov or Adult Behavioral Health Treatment Manager Gayle Martinsen at gayle.martinsen@hca.wa.gov.

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