

Samaritan Health Plans

CMS-Required Health Equity Analysis of Prior Authorization

Final Report for Public Posting | CMS-4201-F Compliance | Report Year: 2024

Health Equity & Prior Authorization Review: What We Found in 2024

At Samaritan Health Plans, we want everyone to get the care they need—especially people who may face more challenges because of money, disability, or where they live. We reviewed how we make decisions about **prior authorizations** (PAs) in 2024. A PA is when your doctor asks us to approve care before it happens.

What We Looked At

We looked at over **15,000 PA requests** and studied how fast we made decisions and how often we said yes or no. We paid special attention to members with:

- **Low incomes.**
- **Disabilities.**
- **Different races, ethnicities, and languages.**
- **Rural or hard-to-reach locations.**

What We Found

- **Most PA requests were approved:**
 - **96.5%** of standard requests.
 - **99.6%** of urgent requests.
- Some early signs of **differences in wait times** and outcomes showed up for certain groups, like people with lower incomes or disabilities.
- However, the **biggest takeaway** was that **our data was often incomplete**, especially for race, ethnicity, and language. That means our findings were **directional**—they showed possible problems but were **not conclusive**.
- Even so, these early warning signs were **important enough** that we took action to improve **fairness and access**.

What We Are Doing to Fix It

We are taking action right away:

- Adding **equity reviews** to our policies.
- Improving our system to make sure requests go to the right staff.
- Making it easier for people with limited English or disabilities to get help.
- Training our staff to spot and fix unfair treatment.
- Working on collecting better and more complete data from members.

Our Promise to You

We serve many rural and underserved areas in Oregon. We're not just following rules—we're going further. Our Health Equity and Member Advocacy team is helping us improve how we work every day.

We will keep:

- Improving how we collect and use data
- Listening to our members
- Closing care gaps for those who need it most

Equity means fairness—and it's the heart of what we do.

Need Help?

Call us at **541-768-4550** or visit samhealthplans.org if you want this report in another language or need it in a different format.