



# ASE

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF  
ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY  
*Sound Saves Lives*

## ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY WORKFORCE

### PRIOR AUTHORIZATION

#### Issue

Prior authorization requires physicians to obtain pre-approval for medical treatments or tests before rendering care to their patients. **The process for obtaining approval typically requires physicians to spend the equivalent of two or more days each week negotiating with insurance companies.** Patients are experiencing significant barriers to medically necessary care due to prior authorization requirements for items and services that are eventually routinely approved.

#### Legislation

The ***Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act*** would:

- Establish an electronic prior authorization process for Medicare Advantage (MA) plans
- Increase transparency around MA prior authorization requirements
- Establish timeframes for electronic requests improving processing times and reducing errors
- Expand beneficiary protections to improve enrollee experiences and outcomes
- Require HHS to report to Congress on program integrity efforts and ways to further improve the process

The ***Reducing Medical Unnecessary Delays in Care Act*** would:

- Require prior authorization decisions to be made by physicians in the same specialty board certification
- Prohibit denials based solely on lack of evidence when no standards exist
- Require transparency by publishing statistics on approvals and denials



#### ASE RECOMMENDATION

Cosponsor the ***Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act*** (S. 4532/H.R. 8702) and ***Reducing Medical Unnecessary Delays in Care Act (HR 2433)***

### INCREASED GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION SLOTS

#### Issue

**The United States faces an overall shortage of up to 124,000 physicians by 2034, including 77,100 specialty and 48,000 primary care physicians.** For echocardiography, it's critical to increase medical slots now because specialty physicians require up to seven years of post-graduate residency training compared to three years for primary care physicians. Given the increased demand created for their services by an aging population and the concern that more physicians are leaving medical practice early due to burnout, Congress needs to take steps now to ensure a fully trained specialty physician workforce for the future.

#### Legislation

The ***Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act*** will improve the nation's graduate medical education (GME) system and help to preserve access to specialty care by:

- Increasing Medicare-supported GME residency slots by 14,000 over the next seven years
- Specifying priorities for distributing the new slots (e.g., states with new medical schools, rural communities)



#### ASE RECOMMENDATION

Cosponsor the ***Resident Physician Shortage Reduction Act (S. 1302/H.R. 2389)***

*American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) is the Society for Cardiovascular Ultrasound Professionals™. It is the largest global organization for cardiovascular ultrasound imaging serving physicians, sonographers, nurses, veterinarians, and scientists and as such is the leader and advocate, setting practice standards and guidelines for the field.*