

July 6, 2023



CRA Membership E-blast

Hello Shanna

The California Rheumatology Alliance remains dedicated to providing updated news and resources to our membership. We appreciate and encourage any feedback to assist in our service to our members. What do YOU want us to talk about? We'd love for these newsletters to be used as an opportunity for us all to learn from each other, so if there's anything specific you're interested in learning more about from other people involved with the California Rheumatology Alliance, let us know by emailing info@calrheum.org.

Visit our Website

SAVE THE DATE!
ADVANCED PRACTITIONER PROVIDER PROGRAM



California
Rheumatology
Alliance

2023 CRA ADVANCED PRACTITIONER PROVIDER PROGRAM



Saturday, September 30, 2023
8am - 4:30pm
JW Marriott L.A. Live

Please save the date for our upcoming CRA Advanced Practitioner Provider Educational Program, scheduled to take place on Saturday, September 30, 2023, at the prestigious JW Marriott LA Live in Downtown Los Angeles.

This educational program is specifically designed for rheumatology advanced practitioners and aims to provide them with the latest insights, developments, and best practices in the field. Bookmark the link below to stay informed on all the details!

[CRA Advanced Practitioner Provider Program](#)

2023 CRA MEMBERSHIP DUES

The 2023 CRA Annual Membership is open for renewal! Pay your annual dues easily online for exclusive access to special membership benefits such as discounted rates on your meeting registration, tickets for amusement parks, movies, and stage shows as well as curated information surrounding news and policies that directly impact the rheumatology community.

[Pay your 2023 CRA Membership Dues now](#)

Summer is in full swing we are excited to partner with Ticketsatwork.com for all your activity and vacation needs! They have hot deals on all things health and wellness for your associates to take advantage of this summer as well as offers to share as they start planning their summer vacation with savings on flights, hotels, rental cars, and even cruises.

If you haven't signed up yet, click [become a member](#) and enter our company code: **ALLIANCE17**

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

What is new in CRA advocacy:

June and July are some of the busier months in the California Legislature where bills are being reviewed by policy committees in the "second House" and the Budget is being finalized.

When bills go the second House, they tend to face more scrutiny as Legislators are more focused on the policy and political details. Legislators are also harder on bills from the opposite House. Particularly as we are in the first year of a two-year session, some bills can get held up in the legislative process and will not move forward this year.

The state Budget was signed by the Governor putting in place a \$310 billion spending plan that close a \$30 billion deficit without using reserves. The Budget deal includes a Managed Care Organization (MCO) Tax that will generate more than \$19 billion to be used on the state's health infrastructure and increase Medi-Cal provider rates.

Here are some details:

In 2024, provider rates for primary care, maternity care, and non-specialty mental health services will be increased to at least 87.5% of Medicare.

Starting in 2025, more than \$6 billion annually will be put into the Medi-Cal program and health care workforce in the following ways:

- \$1.38 billion for primary care rate increases;
- \$1.15 billion for specialty care rate increases;
 - It is unclear how these funds will be distributed amongst the various specialties. There are no details included in the legislation and those decisions will be done outside of the legislative process.
- \$700 million to increase emergency department access including \$200 million for emergency physicians
- \$500 million for family planning and reproductive health care;
- \$600 million for behavioral health facilities including inpatient psychiatric beds;
- \$75 million to expand GME residency slots.

Below are a few bills CRA is advocating on this year.

[SB 598 \(Skinner\)](#) – CRA Position: Support

This bill would create a "gold card" program where if a contracted physician has 90% of their prior authorization requests approved they would be exempt from having to go through prior authorization for the following 12 months. The bill also includes a provision requiring the health plan to use a provider with the same or similar specialty as the treating physician when reviewing appeals

Passed Senate and is in the Assembly Health Committee

[AB 948 \(Berman\)](#) – CRA Position: Support

This bill would make permanent the law capping cost sharing expenses for covered outpatient prescription drugs to \$250 per drug for up to a 30 day supply. This law, which has been critical to patients being to afford their medications is currently set to expire at the end of 2023 unless this bill passes.

Passed Assembly and is in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

[SB 70 \(Wiener\)](#) – CRA Position: Support

This bill, sponsored by the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, requires health plans and insurers to cover denied medications, including the prescribed dose, for the duration of an appeals process. This bill also strengthens California's prohibition on non-medical switching by applying that same prohibition to a prescribed dose or dose level of a drug.

Passed the Senate and is in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

[SB 873 \(Bradford\)](#) – CRA Position: Support

This bill would require health plans and health insurers to pass through to enrollees at the time of purchasing prescription drugs at least 90% of all rebates received, or to be received, in connection with the dispensing or administration of the drug being prescribed.

Passed the Senate and is in the Assembly Health Committee.

[AB 874 \(Weber\)](#) – **CRA Position: Co-Sponsoring**

Working with the Hemophilia Council of California, Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute, and the ALS organization. This bill would clarify the law to allow patients to use funds received from any source for the purpose of helping them afford medications to count those funds towards their out-of-pocket requirements. Unfortunately, this bill was not heard in the Assembly Health Committee due to concerns with the Chair of the Committee. The bill is eligible to be heard in January of 2024.

We are always looking for patient stories around your challenges with health care system in particular any challenges with the prior authorization process. If you have any patient stories or are interested in learning more about CRA advocacy efforts, please email Tim Madden at madden@mgadvocacy.com or Shanna Castro at susui@calrheum.org

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California Rheumatology Alliance | 5230 Pacific Concourse Drive, Suite 100, Los Angeles, CA 90045

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