

April 8, 2022



California
Rheumatology
Alliance

CRA Membership E-blast

Greetings!

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.

If there are any topics you are interested in and would like for us to cover via webinar, please email info@calrheum.org.

Visit our Website

CRA MEMBERSHIP DUES

The 2022 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 2022 Membership Dues today!

CRA 18TH ANNUAL MEETING

May 14-15, 2022
SAN FRANCISCO MARRIOTT MARQUIS
San Francisco, CA

The 18th Annual Meeting is fast approaching and we're excited to welcome you to San Francisco, CA May 14-15, 2022! Back to in-person meetings? Yes! We have been looking forward to this for a while and can't wait to see you all again! Looking forward to more opportunities to mingle with your colleagues and learn from our faculty.

We will be having an Honorary Luncheon on Saturday, May 14, at 1:00 PM celebrating the Lifetime Achievements of CRA Founder, Dr. Michael Stevens. This event is included in your registration fee and we hope you'll join us for an afternoon of fun and fellowship.

Our program offers **8 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits TM** Successful completion of this CME activity, which includes participation in the evaluation component, enables the participant to earn up to **4.0 MOC** points. The education provided at this meeting will help you to keep pace with the changing healthcare environment while improving the care you provide to your patients.

Please visit [our website](#) for more information and to register. Tell your friends and colleagues about this exciting event and we hope to see you there!

Be sure to take advantage of this opportunity to save on your registration fee by registering before April 29th.

We can't wait to see you there!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

What is new in CRA advocacy:

The policy committees in the California Legislature are reviewing are busily reviewing bills introduced in 2022. CRA has taken positions on a number of bills that impact your patients and practices. Please review those bills below. If you are interested in learning more about these bills and help the CRA advocacy team with its efforts to see these bills become law please contact Shanna or Tim.

CRA is co-sponsoring follow up legislation to AB 347 from last year to try and push through improvements to the step therapy and prior authorization processes that were taken out of AB 347. This bill is [AB 1880 \(Arambula\)](#) and contains the more controversial parts of AB 347 which should provide a challenging battle for us this year. These include:

- Requiring reporting by health plans on their utilization management practices (such as how many prior authorization and step therapy requests they deny and approve each plan year)
- Requiring health plans to use a clinical peer where someone of the same or similar specialty is reviewing the appeal of a step therapy exception request or prior authorization request (ex. a rheumatologist is reviewing a rheumatologist and an oncologists is reviewing an oncologist)

Other bills introduced which CRA will be actively working on include:

[SB 958 \(Limon\)](#) – CRA Position – Support

This bill addresses three growing areas of concerns as it relates to in-office injections:

- “White bagging” where payers are requiring patients to obtain their medications from a pharmacy specified by the payer and the medications are then sent to the physician for injection/infusion,
- “Brown bagging” where payers require patients to obtain their medications directly from a pharmacy and the patient brings them to the physician’s office for injection/infusion, and
- The growing trend where payers are requiring patients to have their medications injected/infusion at home.

SB 958 would make it more difficult for payers require patients to be subjected to the three situations described above. This bill is being heard in the Senate Health Committee on April 6th.

[SB 853 \(Wiener\)](#) – 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. SB 853 continues our work to better ensure patients who are stable on their medications can stay on their medications.

[AB 2352 \(Nazarian\)](#) – CRA Position – Support

The California Chronic Care Coalition, which CRA is a member, is sponsoring this bill to require health plans to provide patients and physicians, upon consent from the patient, access to a “real time benefit tool” that will assist the patient in understanding the cost to acquire the needed medication which will improve a patient’s ability to begin therapy without delay. CRA was asked to be one of two primary witnesses to testify in support of the bill at the Assembly Health Committee hearing on March 29th. The bill passed the Health Committee and is now headed to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

The CRA advocacy team is excited for what lies ahead in 2022. If you would like to get involved in advocacy whether it be learning more about the bills, contacting your local legislator on important advocacy issues, or even testifying on bills being considered, please contact Tim Madden at madden@mqadvocacy.com

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