



CRA August 2021 Newsletter

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](#)

2021 CRA ANNUAL MEETING & HONORARY LUNCHEON

We're happy to announce that we're back + looking forward to our upcoming meeting this year! Please save the date for the 17th Annual Medical & Scientific Meeting that will be held in conjunction with the UCLA Carl Pearson Symposium

October 8 - 12, 2021
Marina del Rey Marriott
Marina del Rey, CA

We also invite you to join us in celebrating our 2021 Lifetime Achievement Honoree: Dr. Daniel E. Furst! Dr. Furst has contributed so much to rheumatology and we were honored to have him serve as a CRA Board Member! The luncheon is open to all registered member of the meeting. If you are unable to attend in person, we will be live streaming the event as well.

For more information on the meeting and how to register, please [click here](#) to visit our website!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

We had written last month about an issue with Cigna making a policy change to move Remicade to nonpreferred status in favor of Avsola and Inflectra. CRA met again with DMHC who continues to look into the matter. We have provided more background information for the Department and anticipate meeting with them again in August to further explore what options are available to address the problems this is causing for patients.

The California Legislature is out of Sacramento with the Summer Recess running until August 16th. When they return it will be a full sprint to address bills leading to the September 10th end to the first year of the two-year session.

CRA is continuing to work on [AB 347 \(Arambula\)](#) which is being co-sponsored by CRA, Arthritis Foundation, and Crohn's and Colitis Foundation to establish standard exceptions to step therapy, require decisions on prior authorization and step therapy exception requests be done with 72 hours or 24 hours for exigent situations, and require the payers' use a physician who is of the same or similar specialty as the treating physician when reviewing an appeal to a step therapy exception request.

The insurers are increasing their opposition to the bill and are focusing on trying to remove the part of the bill that would require the insurers to use a physician who is of the same or similar specialty as the

treating physician when reviewing an appeal to a step therapy exception request. If you have any examples of experiences working with an insurer clinical peer reviewer whose specialty was outside of rheumatology, we could use your help. Please share those stories and the impact on your patients. This will help us solidify with Legislators the need to keep this important provision.

Other bills CRA is tracking include:

- [SB 568 \(Pan\)](#) would lower out-of-pocket costs for consumers by requiring certain medicines and benefits used to treat chronic disease be covered without subjecting patients to a deductible. This bill was heard in the Assembly Health Committee, but no votes were cast. The Committee felt it needed to be further analyzed to address concerns raised by the Chair of the Committee. The bill will be eligible for a vote next year, CRA supports this bill.
- [AB 1278 \(Nazarian\)](#) was introduced to require physicians to disclose any remuneration received from drug and device companies to patients both verbally and in writing. CRA has been working on the bill which has been amended to require physicians to provide annually a written disclosure to patients about the Open Payments Database as well as updating signage in the front of the physician's office on how to access the Open Payments Database. CRA continues to oppose the bill.
- [SB 250 \(Pan\)](#) would provide a process for physicians who have a record of appropriate authorizations for medical treatment and prescribing to avoid going through burdensome prior authorization processes. This bill was not heard in the Assembly Health Committee due to concerns raised by the Chair of the Committee. This bill is still eligible to be heard next year. CRA supports this bill.

If you have any questions or would like additional information on any of these bills, please contact Tim Madden at madden@mqadvocacy.com.

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