
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anthony Portantino, Chair
2023 - 2024 Regular Session

AB 1437 (Irwin) - Medi-Cal: serious mental illness

Version: April 13, 2023

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: July 3, 2023

Policy Vote: HEALTH 12 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Agnes Lee

Bill Summary: AB 1437 would require the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to automatically approve a Medi-Cal prescription refill for a drug for serious mental illness for 365 days after the initial prescription is dispensed, as specified.

Fiscal Impact: Unknown, potentially significant costs to the Medi-Cal program to the extent the provisions of the bill would result in higher utilization of prescription drug benefits.

Background: The Medi-Cal program, administered by DHCS, provides medical coverage for eligible low-income individuals. Current law establishes a schedule of benefits under the Medi-Cal program, including prescription drugs, subject to the Medi-Cal contract drug list and utilization controls. Prior authorization is one of the utilization controls that may be applied to Medi-Cal services. "Prior authorization" requires approval by a DHCS consultant, of a specified service in advance of the rendering of that service based upon a determination of medical necessity; and, includes authorization for multiple services which are requested and granted on the basis of an extended treatment plan where there is a need for continuity in the treatment of a chronic or extended condition.

Proposed Law: AB 1437 would require a Medi-Cal prescription refill for a drug for serious mental illness to be automatically approved for a period of 365 days after the initial prescription is dispensed if both the following conditions are met:

- The prescription is for a person 18 years of age or over; and,
- The person is not within the transition jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

-- END --