



2019 Legislative Session

Prohibiting Prior Authorization for GYN and OB Ultrasounds

The Problem

Routine obstetrical ultrasound is an accepted part of maternity care practice as described in ACOG's 2016 Practice Bulletin:

"At various gestational ages, an ultrasound examination is an accurate method of determining gestational age, fetal number, viability, and placental location, and it is recommended for all pregnant patients. An ultrasound examination in the second trimester also should include screening for structural abnormalities." [Ultrasound in pregnancy. Practice Bulletin No. 175. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Obstet Gynecol 2016;128:e241-56].

As a means to lower expenses, health insurers have begun discussing imposing/ expanding prior authorizations requirements on OB-Gyn ultrasounds; this bill precludes the expansion of prior authorizations in all forms of health insurance.

With many women in New Mexico receiving limited or late prenatal care, it is essential that access to obstetrical ultrasound not be limited. Accurate pregnancy dating and detecting issues that can result in maternal and/or neonatal morbidity or mortality (placenta previa, twins, risk for preterm labor, etc.) are vital steps in preventing a multitude of expensive and dangerous complications. Ultrasound is the most accurate and efficient tool to assess internal status and should be allowed as needed and unimpeded.

The Proposal

The proposal will prohibit all health insurers that provide coverage for gynecological or obstetrical ultrasounds from requiring prior authorization for ultrasound.

NMSA 1978 is amended in six sections or incorporate the new material. The provisions affect all policies issued on or after July 1, 2019.

NMMS asks your support to prohibit prior authorizations for obstetrical and gynecological ultrasounds.

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