

# Submit Prior Authorization Requests Electronically to Quickly Identify Applicable Coverage Criteria for Pharmacy Benefit Drugs



## What is electronic prior authorization (ePA)?

Prior authorization (PA) is a cost-control process that requires health care providers to obtain advance approval from the health plan before a pharmacy benefit drug qualifies for payment.

Electronic prior authorization, or ePA, describes a simple and secure process that enables your office to complete PA requests online.

Submitting PAs electronically via integrated electronic health record (EHR) ePA tools or online ePA portals helps your patients get their medications faster compared to phone and fax methods.

## ePA portals provide real-time insight into member benefit configurations and drug coverage requirements.

### The problem:

A 2024 survey by the American Medical Association (AMA) found the majority of physician respondents (610 out of 1,000 surveyed, 61%) reported challenges determining when a prescription drug required a PA.<sup>1</sup>

Member-specific variation in pharmacy benefit coverage also poses a barrier to the PA process when requests are submitted via fax or telephone.

### The solution:

ePA portals with real-time pharmacy benefit check (RTPBC) technology offer providers and administrators the following insights into the individual member's benefit:

- PA requirements
- Patient-anticipated out-of-pocket costs
- Covered preferred formulary alternatives

Identifying pharmacy benefit details via RTPBC enables timely discussions about clinically appropriate and affordable medications, which can increase the likelihood of patient adherence to their therapy.

## How can providers access ePA platforms at no cost?

You can submit PA requests for most pharmacy and medical benefit drugs through the Medical and Pharmacy Drug PA Portal. To access this application:

1. Log in to our provider portal at [availability.com](https://availability.com)\*
2. Click *Payer Spaces* on the menu bar and then click the BCSBSM and BCN logo.
3. Click the *Medical and Pharmacy Drug Prior Auth* tile in the Applications tab.

If you need to request access to our provider portal, see the [Register for Web Tools webpage](https://bcbsm.com/register-for-web-tools) on bcbsm.com. Some EHR systems may have integrated ePA tools that allow you to proactively initiate the PA request directly from your EHR at the time of prescribing to save time, rather than waiting for a claim rejection from the pharmacy before initiating the PA request.

If you don't have access to an integrated ePA portal within your EHR, you can alternatively use ePA portals available online at no cost.

Examples of other free online ePA portals, which also have EHR integration capabilities\*\*:

- [CoverMyMeds®](#) \*
- [SureScripts®](#) \*

## Resources for providers:

See the [Pharmacy Benefit Drugs page](#) on [authorizations.bcbsm.com](https://authorizations.bcbsm.com) for additional information about prior authorizations for medical and pharmacy benefit drugs.

**Questions? Call the Pharmacy Help Desk at 1-800-437-3803.**

## Footnotes:

\*Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network don't own or control this website.

\*\*Applicable access and feature capabilities are dependent upon the health system's EHR platform.

## References:

1. 2024 AMA prior authorization physician survey. AMA. Accessed February 24, 2025.  
<https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/prior-authorization-survey.pdf> \*



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