

# Preauthorization Survey: Executive Summary

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In May 2013, the AASM began collecting survey data on the preauthorization process for sleep testing. Between May and September 245 sleep centers and sleep physicians submitted data on their experiences with preauthorization. The AASM is now providing members with detailed reports on national and regional survey data. The data is not scientific and results have not been validated by a statistician. The survey results demonstrate the varying experiences of AASM membership faced with the burdens of preauthorization.

## **Survey Results**

Two hundred forty-five valid survey responses were tabulated. The final results do not include data from surveys that were found to contain only outlier data. Data from surveys that included both outlier and normative data were included. The sample size is small, reflecting approximately 2.5% of the AASM membership. Members should therefore be cautious of how they use the results.

## **Payers with Significant Impact**

Members reported most frequently on the processes of five payers: Aetna (n=153), Anthem BCBS (N=70), Cigna (n=186), Humana (n=71) and UnitedHealthcare (n=212). These large payers implemented preauthorization protocols across the country in 2012 and 2013.

## **Regional Impact**

In conducting data analysis, the AASM considered whether assumptions could be made based on the number of surveys received from each region. If it is assumed that regions with the most survey respondents are most-overburdened, the burden of preauthorization is currently hitting hardest in the South (n=98). This is surprising given that preauthorization protocols started and seem to be most pervasive in the Northeast (n=54). Based on the number of surveys received, preauthorization protocols are not yet having as much a significant impact on the West (n=38) but are having an impact in the Midwest (n=55).

### Preauthorization Process: Time Burden

Survey respondents provided a wide range of responses to questions about the time burden of the preauthorization process. The variable responses as documented in “Range of Completion and Payer Response Time” chart below reflect the varying time requirements of the methods of preauthorization submission (web portal, phone, fax). For example, a sleep center staff person can spend hours on the phone waiting to submit preauthorization information to a payer. Alternatively, submission via a web portal may take a far shorter amount of time. Below is a brief summary of some key data.

#### *Average Task Completion and Payer Response Time*

<b>Payer</b>	<b>Collect Info (in min)</b>	<b>Complete Form (in min)</b>	<b>Submit Form (in min)</b>	<b>Total Time (in min)</b>	<b>Payer Response time (in days)</b>
Aetna (n=126)	37	34	6	77	4
Anthem (n=59)	15	20	6	41	3
Cigna (n=151)	100	15	5	120	8
Humana (n=53)	145	22	18	185	7
United (n=173)	69	11	11	91	6
Weighted Average	71.57	19.20	8.51	99.32	6.68

#### *Range of Completion and Payer Response Time*

<b>Payer</b>	<b>Collect Info (in min)</b>	<b>Complete Form (in min)</b>	<b>Submit Form (in min)</b>	<b>Total Time (in min)</b>	<b>Payer Response (in days)</b>
Aetna (n=126)	0 – 2,480	0 – 4,320	0 – 75	0 – 4,327	0 – 17.5
Anthem (n=59)	0.58 – 1,440	0.38 – 1,440	0 – 35	0 – 1,470	0 – 29.5
Cigna (n=151)	0 – 20,160	0.47 – 120	0.01 – 70	0 – 20,196	0 – 24.5
Humana (n=53)	1 – 11,520	0 – 1,440	0 – 1,440	0 – 11,640	0 – 15
United (n=173)	0 – 10,080	0 – 250	0 – 1,440	0 – 10,123	0 – 24.5

## Preauthorization Appeals and Appeals Outcome

Many survey respondents provided data on appeals of payers' initial preauthorization decision. Appeals submission generally takes less time than submission of the original authorization request and it typically takes less time to receive a response from the payer. The weighted average appeals approval rate across payers is 58%.

<b>Payer</b>	<b>Completion Time (in min)</b>	<b>Response Time (in days)</b>	<b>Frequency Appeal is Approved</b>
Aetna (n=72)	46	12	53%
Anthem (n=36)	51	19	65%
Cigna (n=77)	25	15	51%
Humana (n=19)	30	16	52%
United (n=78)	36	14	67%
Weighted Average	37.06	14.54	58%

## Conclusion

Preauthorization has impacted AASM members very differently across the country. Some members have reported preauthorization submission times of over two weeks. Other members are able to collect and submit preauthorization information in under a minute. There are clearly lessons to be learned to better navigate these processes. As noted previously in this summary, with such a small sample size the data collected in this survey is not scientific and should be considered informational only.