



SENATOR JEFF GORDON
THIRTY-FIFTH SENATE DISTRICT

CAPITOL: (860) 240-8800
TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1421
E-MAIL: Jeffrey.Gordon@cga.ct.gov
WEB: SenatorGordon.com

State of Connecticut

SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

DEPUTY REPUBLICAN LEADER

RANKING MEMBER
VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE

November 20, 2024

Via electronic mail

Christine Cappiello
Senior Director, Government Relations
Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Connecticut
Christine.Cappiello@anthem.com

Dear Christine,

I hope this email finds you well. Please find an attached letter.

In addition to being a state senator, I am also a practicing physician (hematology-oncology). Therefore, I bring a unique perspective on healthcare, informed by over 31 years of direct patient care.

I am very concerned that Anthem BCBS is proposing a significant change to its reimbursement policy, such that it will no longer pay for anesthesia care if a surgery or procedure exceeds a time limit specified by Anthem BCBS—regardless of how long the surgery or procedure takes or the patient-specific reasons that necessitate an extension.

This concern is shared by my anesthesiologist colleagues in Connecticut and across the United States.

Please see related articles for background:

- [Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield Will Not Pay for Complete Duration of Anesthesia for Surgical Procedures](#)
- [ASA Letter to Anthem: Time Units](#)

Thus, my question: Why would Anthem BCBS set a time limit on covering anesthesiology time for surgeries and procedures? Is there research or data that supports the company's policy on this matter? For patients, it raises the concern that profits are being prioritized over medical care.

As you know, there are many clinical reasons why a surgery or procedure could run longer than its scheduled time. My physician and healthcare professional colleagues, and I, take such factors into account when briefing our patients on surgical options. This includes, but is not limited to, discussions and planning for situations where unexpected challenges might arise. Anthem BCBS's limitation on anesthesia time coverage disregards these real-world medical circumstances.

This policy is contrary to providing good and safe medical care for people in Connecticut and other states. It could lead to avoidable adverse events and/or unnecessary bad outcomes. Why would Anthem BCBS pursue such a policy?

ASHFORD · CHAPLIN · COVENTRY · EASTFORD · ELLINGTON · HAMPTON · STAFFORD · TOLLAND
THOMPSON · UNION · VERNON · WILLINGTON · WOODSTOCK

For example, if a woman is undergoing a hysterectomy for fibroid bleeding, and her surgeon makes a medical decision within accepted standards of care to extend the surgery time to control bleeding in the surgical field, Anthem BCBS's time limit rule leaves the surgeon and anesthesiologist with two options: 1) Continue the surgery, and the patient will incur additional anesthesia charges beyond the time limit (possibly leading to crippling medical debt); or 2) Prematurely stop the surgery because of Anthem BCBS's time limit.

There are many other real-world examples I could provide.

I have been in contact with the American Society of Anesthesiologists and the Connecticut State Society of Anesthesiologists. These professional organizations have been in contact with Anthem BCBS. I ask that Anthem BCBS meet with them and others, as needed, to address this serious issue.

I urge Anthem BCBS to do the right thing and reverse this proposed decision. People's healthcare and lives depend on it.

I am available to meet and discuss this serious issue. I look forward to a timely reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey A. Gordon MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small "MD" at the end.

State Sen. Jeff Gordon,
35th State Senate District