

# **Improving Access to Care: Experiences in the U.S.**

**Michael W. Fried, M.D.**

**Professor of Medicine**

**Director, UNC Liver Center**

**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**



**UNC**

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

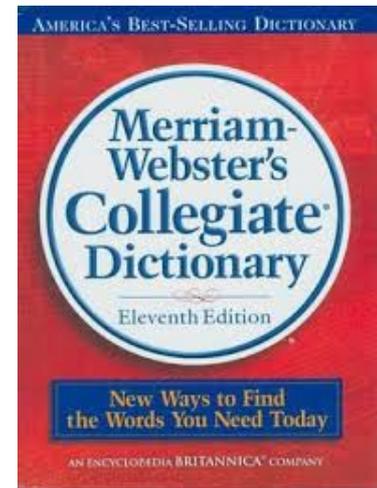
# **HCV In the United States**

- **Approximately 4-5 million people infected**
- **About 50% have been diagnosed**
- **Recent efforts to increase case identification through “Baby Boomer” birth cohort testing of those born between 1945 and 1965**
- **Increasing incidence of HCC and other HCV-associated complications from cirrhosis**
- **New infections among young adults fueled by heroin**
- **Treatment regimens are now simple but the administrative burden is not**

# What is “Prior Authorization”

*Noun* [prahy-eh-law-ther-uh-zey-shuh n]

1. Voluminous paperwork that turns relatively simple, all-oral treatment regimens into an administrative nightmare
2. An obstacle created to discourage physicians from treating patients with HCV
3. A system that frequently removes treatment decisions from the physician/patient and places it within the realm of an anonymous voice at the other end of the telephone
  - *See:* “Appeals Process”
  - *Also see:* “Twilight Zone”



# The Long and Winding Road to Treating a Patient with HCV in the U.S.



Physician discusses treatment with patient and writes prescription

Determine which health insurance plan

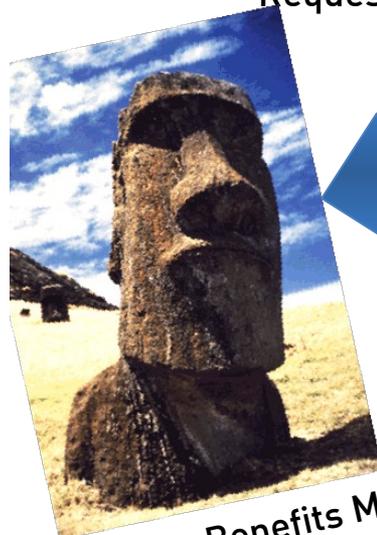


Office staff completes Specific "Prior Authorization" Request



FAX Form to Pharmacy Benefits Manager

Wait



Pharmacy Benefits Manager:  
Manages drug costs for insurer  
Negotiates rebates



Call to find out what happened: on hold 30 min

Form Lost



FAX Form Again to PBM

Wait

"Need More Info": ReFAX

"Denied"

"Approved"

# Health Insurance in U.S.:

## Multiple Payer System

- **Medicare: Federal system**
  - Covers patients age 65 or older
- **Medicaid:**
  - State level health insurance for indigent patients
  - Must meet strict low income eligibility requirements which vary by state
  - Coverage decisions vary by state
  - **Affordable Care Act: Legislation designed to expand Medicaid eligibility and provide insurance subsidies to those who cannot otherwise afford health insurance**
- **Private, Commercial Health Insurance**
  - Usually provided through employment
  - Many different insurance companies
  - Multiple plans and coverage within each insurance company

# **Multiple Payer System with Different Eligibility Requirements for HCV Therapy: Examples**

- **Drug test within 15 days of starting therapy**
- **Treatment limited to F3 or F4**
- **Treatment limited to “F4 or higher”**
- **Dispense only 14 tablets at a time**
- **Must verify week 2 HCV RNA to continue**
- **Must verify week 4 HCV RNA to continue**
- **Will approve only 8 weeks of treatment regardless of genotype and regimen-must reapply during therapy**
- **“Harvoni denied because they did not fail sofosbuvir based regimen”: Approved for 24 weeks of SMV + SOF instead**

# **Improving Access to HCV Therapy**

- **Decrease administrative barriers**
- **Allow qualified healthcare providers to do what they do best: Treat their patients**