

Enhanced Utilization Review



A public, not-for-profit Medicaid HMO plan has a long-standing reputation among providers and members for delivering a comprehensive suite of benefits to improve health outcomes for its 180,000 members. The organization sought guidance from Clearlink Partners to provide an end-to-end assessment of the utilization management (UM) department and implement recommendations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the department's operations.



The Challenge

Before engaging with Clearlink, the health plan's utilization management (UM) department lacked specific tools, such as a comprehensive reporting suite, to obtain timely and accurate metrics and benchmarks for its team to review. Without this tool, the department lacked the ability to understand its effectiveness in terms of maintaining productivity, meeting compliance requirements, and following quality measures. In addition, the organization's medical management system was outdated, cumbersome, and in need of an upgrade.



Until the health plan could implement innovative reporting tools, align its processes, and update its medical management system, the plan was unable to achieve its utilization review productivity goals. A lack of evaluated and processed authorizations also left the organization unsure if member care continued to successfully meet evidence-based guidelines. The senior leadership team looked to Clearlink for help assessing the current state of the utilization management department, supplying recommendations to resolve identified issues, and leading the implementation of those corrective next steps to optimize the UM department entirely.



The Solution

Clearlink began the engagement by performing an extensive gap analysis, which consisted of reviewing the organization's current utilization management reporting structure, department organization design, UM committee processes and procedures, delegated medical group (DMG) management, and operations against industry best practices and benchmarks. Clearlink also collected feedback on current UM processes compiled from interviews conducted with key health plan staff, from senior management to utilization review nurses. With this information, Clearlink built a remediation plan and timeline to support gap closure and preparation for department optimization.

Recommendations provided in the remediation plan included building a comprehensive UM report module, updating UM committee processes and documents, establishing a new organizational structure for the UM department, and making several updates to key UM documents. Clearlink partnered with the health plan's team to implement these recommendations, holding weekly update meetings to increase decision flow and strategic collaboration. Clearlink also provided several experienced clinical staff members to assist the health plan with its need for additional staffing throughout the implementation period.





The Results

With insights from a robust current state assessments and a clear remediation plan, the organization was able to work closely with Clearlink's experts to develop an all-in-one UM reporting suite, improve critical workflows, document new processes, and deliver staff training for the UM department all over the course of six months. The comprehensive reporting system equipped the organization with the ability to analyze its utilization review trends against important benchmarks and improve the performance of DMGs. Innovating the UM department's organizational design also increased efficiencies amongst staff and accelerated auditing, training, and vital knowledge transfer.

Key Services Provided

Current State Assessment

- UM Policy & Procedure Review
- Delegation Committee Documents Review
- Department Current Organizational Design
- UM Reporting Assessment
- UM Auditing & Training Documents
- Delegated Medical Group Performance Assessment
- Extensive UM & Other Key Staff Interviews
- Knowledge Transfer
- UM System Assessment

Project Implementation Deliverables

- Revised UM Committee Documents
- Revised & New UM Policies
- Prior Authorization Recommendations
- Weekly Project Status Reports
- Final Assessment & Implementation Reports
- UM to Care Management Referral Criteria
- Productivity Metrics
- UM Report List
- Planning Document for Additional Populations (LTC & DSNP)
- Recommendations for Medical Management System Replacement



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About Clearlink Partners

Clearlink Partners is an industry-leading independent clinical and operational consultancy specializing in total cost of care that provides optimized, end-to-end clinical and operational management programs for managed care organizations, health plans, providers, and health systems. Through expert insights, innovative processes, and comprehensive solutions, Clearlink helps healthcare companies improve enterprise-wide alignment and navigate a dynamic healthcare ecosystem.

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