

Clinical Strategy

Executive Takeaway

Healthcare organizations must shift from reactive utilization management to proactive clinical strategy. Leading health systems are increasingly integrating clinical, benefit, network, and population health strategies to improve outcomes, reduce leakage, optimize site of care, and lower total cost of care.

Questions To Take Back To Your Organization

- Are clinical and benefit strategies fully aligned?
 - Do we understand the root causes of leakage?
 - How early are we identifying rising-risk populations?
 - Are we measuring outcomes or administrative activity?
 - Where can provider partnerships reduce friction while improving quality?
-

The Strategic Shift

Yesterday's Focus

- Utilization Management
- Prior Authorization
- Case Management
- Compliance Metrics
- Approval & Denial Rates

Tomorrow's Focus

- Population Health Management
 - Care Navigation
 - Referral Optimization
 - Site-of-Care Management
 - Provider Alignment
-

Data-Driven Engagement

Takeaway: Clinical success is no longer measured by managing utilization. It is measured by improving outcomes, access, experience, and total value.

Top Clinical Challenges Across Health Systems

Common themes identified included:

- Behavioral health and pediatric access
- Provider leakage and steerage
- GLP-1 management
- Clinical guideline consistency
- Care coordination and discharge planning
- Disconnects between benefit design and clinical delivery
- Site-of-care optimization
- End-of-life care management

Four Best Practices Driving Results

1. Align Clinical, Benefit & Network Strategies

Break down organizational silos and coordinate decision-making across functions.

2. Intervene Earlier

Use predictive analytics, gap-in-care identification, risk scoring, and preventive outreach before high-cost events occur.

3. Measure Outcomes, Not Activity

Focus on:

- Reduced admissions
- Lower readmissions
- Better access
- Improved member experience
- Leakage reduction

rather than case counts and authorization volume.

4. Use Data as a Strategic Asset

Leverage data to identify:

- Referral patterns
- Care variation
- High-cost conditions
- Domestic utilization opportunities

Emerging Clinical Strategies

Repatriation & Site-of-Care Optimization

Organizations are increasingly evaluating opportunities to:

- Reduce care leakage
- Improve continuity of care
- Guide members to clinically appropriate settings
- Optimize utilization across hospitals, ambulatory centers, home care, and virtual care

Key Consideration: Any strategy must remain focused on what is clinically appropriate and in the patient's best interest.

Gold Carding

High-performing providers may receive streamlined administrative processes based on:

- Outcomes
- Evidence-based practice
- Prior authorization performance

The goal is to improve provider relationships while reducing unnecessary administrative burden.

In Summary

Stop reacting to trends.

Proactive intervention is replacing traditional utilization management.

Align clinical and benefit strategy.

Clinical, network, and benefit teams must operate from a common strategy.

Let data drive decisions.

Referral patterns, utilization trends, and care variation should inform future strategy.

Measure total value.

Focus on outcomes, access, member experience, and leakage reduction instead of administrative metrics.

Provider partnerships matter.

More collaborative, data-driven, and differentiated provider strategies will shape the next generation of clinical management.

while improving quality?

The future of clinical strategy is proactive, integrated, data-driven, and focused on total value. Health systems that align clinical operations, benefits, network strategy, and population health efforts will be best positioned to improve outcomes, strengthen member experience, and manage total cost of care sustainably.