



Customer Success Story



Priority Health and Altruista Health Team Up To Ease Preauthorization Pain Points

New Authorization Portal speeds approvals and boosts provider satisfaction

Call it a win-win-win. Altruista Health and its customer, Priority Health, successfully collaborated on a project to address a pain point for providers who seek preauthorizations for healthcare on behalf of Priority Health plan members. These queries can add up to as many as 3,500 preauthorization requests every week, considering that Priority Health and its parent organization, Spectrum Health, serve nearly 1 million health plan members and represent 97 percent of Michigan’s primary care practices as an integrated health system. They also represent 96 percent of the state’s hospitals.

The journey to this successful partnership began in 2019 when Priority Health went to implement GuidingCare®, Altruista’s care management technology platform.

Because Priority and Spectrum are an integrated system, the Priority and Altruista implementation teams working on the project had Spectrum providers at the ready to describe what they wanted from an ideal authorization portal. On the provider wish list was the ability to submit preauthorization requests electronically and to readily see their status. They wanted to be able to attach documentation and images to the request within an embedded one-click link.



“We’re trying to walk that fine line. We recognize the providers are on the front lines of delivering high-quality care to our members, and we value that partnership with our providers. We wanted to help solve that problem, reduce that burden and make their lives better.”

Ann Donnelly, Vice President, Care and Utilization Management, Priority Health

Priority Health At-A-Glance

Priority Health



30 years in business



2nd largest health plan in Michigan



Serves more than **1 million members** annually in public and private plans

Integrated with not-for-profit Spectrum Health System



31K team members



4,700 medical staff experts



14 hospitals



150 ambulatory sites & telehealth offerings

Go-Live is a Success

Altruista saw an opportunity to custom-build a portal that would serve Priority Health and Spectrum Health's needs, but also could be replicated for other customers. The process was complex since it involved designing a new tool in the midst of the GuidingCare software implementation. Altruista's product, engineering and implementation teams worked in tandem, coordinating with Priority Health teams as they went. The joint effort was successful and the portal went live in 2020.

Providers can now stop faxing and phoning in requests and get nearly immediate responses through the electronic portal, which relies on the world's leading medical guidelines to validate clinical decision-making.

The revamped process has already brought change to the system by reducing provider administrative burden, as Priority has quickly taken 20 items off its preauthorization list following a few months of data.

Providers Gain Predictability

Automating the workflow creates efficiency, reduces administrative burden all around and improves response times, according to Mike McKittrick, Altruista's Executive Vice President of Clinical Services, and a lead player in the collaboration with Priority.

"It's really helping to standardize those processes so approvals and denials are more predictable," McKittrick said. "Providers very quickly pick up on what the standard of care is and what's likely to be approved or what's not likely to be approved. Over time that helps the evidence-based care that the criteria are built upon."

"We now have the data that shows us by service how many prior authorizations are coming in, how many are we approving, how many are we denying, and what they cost. We can make educated decisions on the value of asking for that prior authorization, and if there's no value in it, then why are we asking physicians to jump through them?"

Ann Donnelly,
Priority Health



Concurrent Reviews Virtually Eliminated

Through the portal, Priority Health and Spectrum Health providers receive authorizations in a matter of moments, allowing more complex requests to be quickly routed for review of medical necessity. The Authorization Portal virtually eliminates concurrent reviews for inpatient stays. These previously required daily phone calls between hospital physicians and health plans during inpatient stays. Now dates or units of care can be extended directly within the Portal.

GuidingCare integrates and is certified with the world's most comprehensive and respected clinical guidelines, MCG Cite AutoAuth and InterQual Connect™. It is the largest and most widely adopted care management and population health platform in the United States. ▲

Priority Health's turnaround time on prior authorization requests is now less than three days. Previous turnaround times varied with the type of request but were definitely longer than that. An estimated 80 percent of preauthorization requests are now auto-approved electronically, saving hours of manual labor. Delays can be a point of friction between providers and health plans, as well as potentially creating member uncertainty and anxiety.

