



ENHANCED INPATIENT REVIEW AND DISCHARGE PLANNING

Highmark's Utilization Management team is adjusting its inpatient review processes for acute facilities to ensure that our members are in the right care setting — for the appropriate amount of time — given their diagnosis and clinical presentation. Our nurses will work in close coordination with your Utilization Review department to effectively manage the inpatient stay and improve overall care coordination.

We will be implementing these best practice utilization management procedures over the next several weeks. Specific adjustments are as follows:

- Using InterQual® as a guideline and considering medical necessity, our utilization management team will determine the appropriate length of stay; notifying you when concurrent update is required.
- Highmark will review documentation for inpatient admission requests to ensure appropriate use of the observation level of care. Observation care is typically a stay lasting less than 48 hours in an acute inpatient facility, usually for the purpose of evaluating a patient's condition for possible admission or resolution, and transition to an outpatient setting. As a general rule, acute inpatient admission is appropriate when your patient care plan cannot be met outside of the hospital setting and the stay is expected to last longer than 48 hours.
- Highmark will initiate the discharge planning process as early as reasonable — for scheduled admissions, discharge planning discussions should begin prior to admission; for emergency situations, these discussions should occur at the time of admission. Increased coordination with your Utilization Review team ensures safe and effective transition of care for our members.
- To facilitate improved coordination with your Utilization Review teams, Highmark has reorganized our inpatient review department into dedicated, regional teams. Acute facilities within a given area will be consistently reviewed by the same group of individuals. We anticipate that this realignment will allow for greater process efficiency, given the increased familiarity between our teams, and provide us both with an opportunity for building personal relationships. Over the next several weeks, our utilization management nurses will be reaching out to your utilization review resources to open these important relationships.

There is no change to current processes for requesting initial authorizations. The preferred method for requesting authorizations is through NaviNet® — authorization requests can also be submitted via fax or telephone. Please note that concurrent updates for requests entered and approved through NaviNet are required within five days of the approval date, unless you have been told otherwise by our utilization management team. Please use the Discharge Planning Information survey in NaviNet to request concurrent review within the five day period. For all other requests, our utilization management team will inform you when concurrent update is required at the time of approval.

These procedural changes are designed to improve care coordination and, by building stronger connections between utilization resources at Highmark and our acute facilities, increase the overall effectiveness of inpatient review and discharge planning. We appreciate your cooperation to help support appropriate care for our members and look forward to working more closely with you.