

USING OUTSIDE SPECIALISTS TO PRE-APPROVE SERVICES

The Facts

company: Q-elements

location: Lubbock, Texas

focus: Pre-Authorizations

monthly claims: 3,000

claims sent for review: 25 to 30 (1%)

AllMed customer since: 2001

website: www.qelements.com

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The Challenge

Of the more than 3,000 pre-authorizations that Q-elements processes per month, about 1 percent -- or 25 to 30 -- require further review to ensure that they are in compliance with contract guidelines or are medically necessary. Maintaining a quality and timely process to ensure patients receive the care they need and are entitled to is extremely important. Q-elements also requires a review process that ensures decisions on questionable cases are made within state-mandated deadlines and completed by like physicians or specialists.

Q-elements does not maintain a full panel of specialists internally, so the company must turn to an Independent Review Organization (IRO) for independent medical reviews. The types of cases typically sent for



external review are either deemed experimental in nature or identified as not meeting the initial criteria for coverage. These reviews must be completed by an external, third-party, preferably not in the same community, to ensure the decisions are unbiased and based on proven medical facts and evidence.

The Solution

Q-elements has turned to Portland-based AllMed Healthcare Management, a leading Independent Review Organization (IRO) with more than 300 peer specialist reviewers, to help independently scrutinize its complex and questionable cases.

"AllMed provides us with access to the specialists we need for making decisions quickly and efficiently," says Tanya McAfee, Vice President of Care Management at Q-elements. "The doctors are very responsive, easy to talk with and make themselves available to speak to our medical director, and even the treating physicians, when the provider does not agree with the decision. AllMed's dedication to customer service and responsiveness has helped us meet the requirements established by the state and better serve our customers."

The Outcome

Outsourcing its medical decision making to AllMed has allowed Q-elements to improve its review process, gain access to specialists, make it easier to meet required state-mandated response times and reduce further appeals. The majority of the cases reviewed by AllMed are finalized within 48 hours or less, with many being completed the same day, within as little as an hour of being received.

Because AllMed's recommendations are based upon medical evidence, the company is able to provide defensible decisions that are seldom questioned further. The staff also works closely with the third-party administrator's nurses and medical staff throughout the decision-making and review process. McAfee adds that one of AllMed's biggest strengths is the staff's adaptability and flexibility. "Whether new information becomes available or a patient or doctor simply has a question, AllMed's doctors always make themselves available throughout the review process."

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About Q-elements

Q-elements, formerly a part of HealthSmart® Preferred Care, provides comprehensive managed care solutions, including utilization management, case management, disease management, wellness programming and quality/compliance support for more than 150,000 members located in over 28 states throughout the U.S. An experienced staff of more than 20 case managers, medical professionals and administrators process more than 3,000 monthly pre-authorizations.

About AllMed Healthcare Management

AllMed provides independent medical reviews that help insurance payers, providers and claims managers control healthcare costs and do what's right for each patient, every time. Founded in 1995, AllMed is a URAC-accredited Independent Review Organization (IRO) serving leading healthcare firms nationwide. Reviews are conducted by board-certified physicians in active practice. More information on AllMed can be found on the company's website at www.allmedmd.com.