AAVBC

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF VALUE BASED CARE

Cost Efficient/Clinically Effective Specialist Selection

Quick Reference Guide

2026

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SPECIALIST SELECTION IN VALUE-BASED CARE

This QRG provides a practical selection model for PCPs, care coordinators, medical groups, ACOs, and Medicare Advantage teams. Its purpose is to **align specialty referrals with better outcomes, lower total cost, reliable communication**, and an acceptable **patient experience**. Selection begins **only after** the clinical need for referral has been established.

AAVBC PERSPECTIVE

*Move from habit- or relationship-based referral patterns to **transparent**, **data-informed specialist selection**. **Clinical effectiveness** is the entry requirement; cost efficiency, access, coordination, network status, and patient preference then **determine the best available match**.*

Core Clinical Standards When Choosing a Specialist

STANDARD	OPERATIONAL MEANING[1–3]	VALUE PROTECTED[4–6]
Match acuity	Pair clinical risk, diagnostic uncertainty, procedure complexity, and comorbidity burden with the **appropriate level of specialty expertise**	Timely expertise **without unnecessary escalation**
Review performance	**Use**: risk-adjusted outcomes, complications, readmissions, evidence-based care, access, communication, and episode cost	Objective selection **beyond reputation alone**
Promote value	Prioritize specialists who use **appropriate tests**, **treatments**, **sites**, **products**, **medications** and **follow-up intensity**	Lower utilization and **patient financial burden**
Track results	**Monitor**: referral completion, note return, outcomes, downstream utilization, and **total cost over time**	Accountability and **continuous improvement**

Value Based Operational Goals

- **Reduce avoidable leakage while maintaining**: patient choice, network adequacy, and clinically necessary exceptions[7,8]
- Send complete, clinically relevant records **before** the first specialist interaction[9,10]
- **Prevent duplicate testing** by transferring usable prior laboratory, imaging, and treatment information[8]

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