GUNDERSEN HEALTH SYSTEM® | HUMATA HEALTH human+data

CASE STUDY

The Future of Healthcare: Automating Radiology Prior Authorizations at Bellin and Gundersen Health System with Humata's Automation and AI

How Bellin and Gundersen's exception-based workflow is redefining Prior Authorization for both staff and patients.

BACKGROUND

Bellin and Gundersen Health System, which is becoming Emplify Health, has headquarters in La Crosse and Green Bay, Wisconsin. It stands out as a leading not-for-profit healthcare network, delivering extensive medical services throughout Wisconsin, Minnesota, Upper Michigan and Iowa. This physician-led, integrated healthcare provider encompasses 11 hospitals and more than 100 clinic locations across these neighboring communities, ensuring quality care close to home. Underpinning their operations is a profound commitment to their mission and vision; Bellin and Gundersen aims to inspire the best life for patients by continuously caring, learning, and innovating.

DRAMATIC RESULTS

26%
of referrals are now automatically closed by Humata for not requiring authorization for any of the associated coverages

20%
days out improvement allowing patients faster delivery of care

3.7%
Peer-to-Peer Rate, a significant improvement achieved through better submission quality, previously unquantifiable due to limited comparative data

THE CHALLENGE

The system's Gundersen Region faced a significant challenge in managing prior authorizations, particularly for their imaging services, which represented one of the highest volumes of service lines requiring prior authorization. The process was entirely manual, with limited automation tools in place to streamline the workflow. This lack of automation meant that staff members had to individually review each order to determine the services being scheduled, then navigate to various payer portals to confirm if the scheduled visit required an authorization. This initial step was cumbersome and time-consuming, diverting valuable resources away from high/complex case review.

The submission process for prior authorizations was identified as the most time-consuming component. Staff members had to transcribe a vast amount of information into the payer portals after gathering the necessary clinical documentation. This manual transcription not only increased the risk of errors but also significantly slowed down the process, leading to delays in patient care.

Moreover, after an authorization was submitted, the staff had to manually check the status of each authorization. This inefficient process did not allow the team to prioritize effectively; they could not focus on the cases that truly required action. The manual checking of authorization status often resulted in unnecessary follow-ups and wasted effort, further complicating the workflow and increasing the administrative burden on the staff.

The need for a solution was clear. Bellin and Gundersen required a more efficient, streamlined process that could reduce the manual workload on staff, minimize errors, and expedite the prior authorization process to ensure timely patient care.
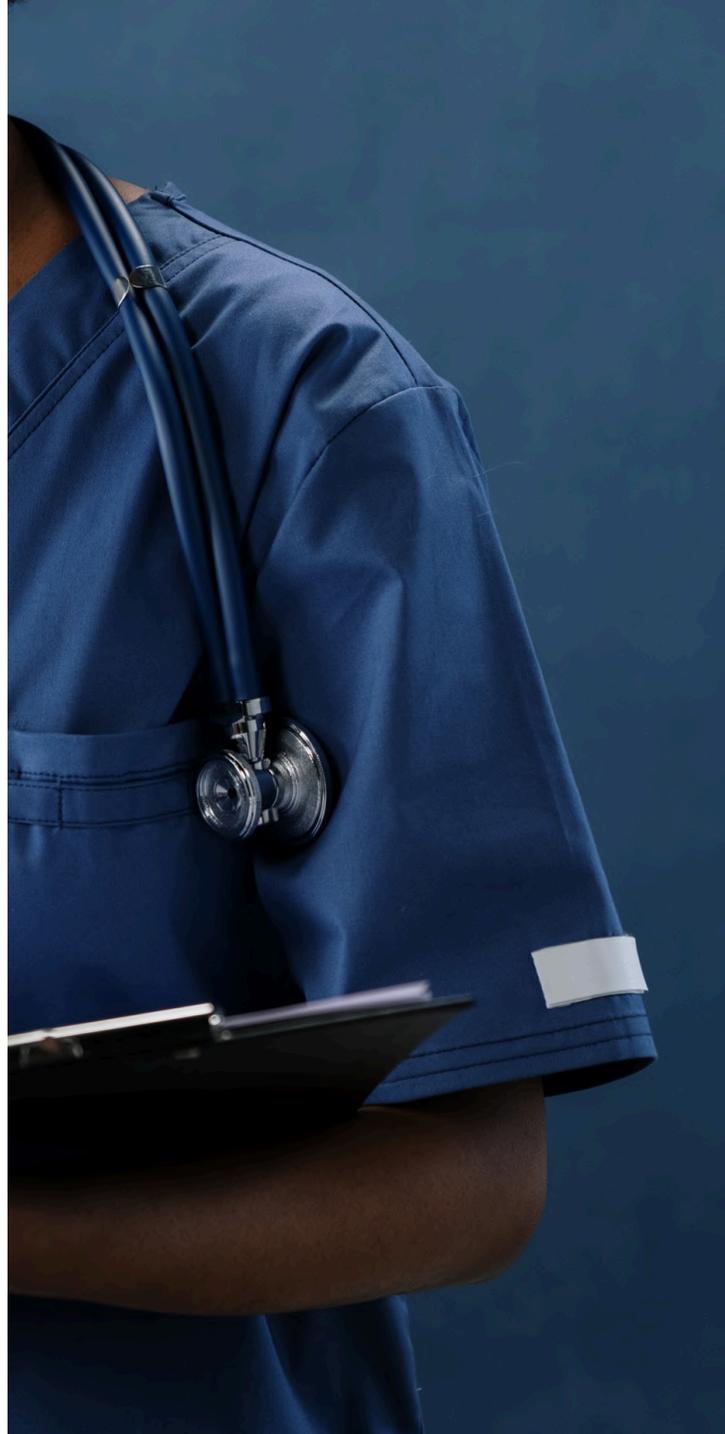
> **"By automating prior authorization imaging referrals we've not only streamlined our workflows but also significantly reduced the administrative burden on our staff. This has allowed our team to dedicate more time and resources to high complex case reviews, leading to faster approval times and a substantial improvement in the overall patient experience. The impact of this partnership on our productivity has been wonderful."**

- Shannon Carey, Director of Patient Access, Gundersen Region, Bellin and Gundersen Health System

THE HUMATA SOLUTION

To enhance operational efficiency and productivity within its Radiology department, Bellin and Gundersen embarked on a transformative journey with Humata Health, integrating the innovative End-to-End Authorization platform, PAthway. This strategic move enabled a shift towards an exception-based workflow, where automation is initiated at the point of order to accurately assess the necessity of prior authorizations for referrals. Remarkably, this automation revealed that 78% of Imaging referrals could be automatically processed by PAthway, allowing the health system's Gundersen Region staff to concentrate their efforts on referrals that necessitated direct intervention. This pivotal change significantly boosted the team's productivity and expedited approval turnaround times, thereby ensuring patients received timely care.

Humata's PAthway system enhanced the submission process, making it exceedingly straightforward for staff. By automating the compilation of essential information—ranging from clinical documentation, patient details, insurance coverage, critical identifiers like NPI/TIN for ordering and servicing providers, as well as CPT and diagnosis codes—PAthway substantially eased the burden on authorization specialists. This streamlined approach not only simplifies communication with payers but also ensures all requisite data is accurately and efficiently conveyed.

"The portal assistant has been a game-changer for our team. The ability to have all necessary information curated and ready for submission in one place has drastically cut down on our processing times. After experiencing the simplicity and effectiveness, it's hard to envision returning to our previous methods."

- Shelly Ulberg, Prior Authorization Specialist, Gundersen Region, Bellin and Gundersen Health System

Furthermore, following the initial submission, PAthway takes charge of the statusing process, autonomously tracking each authorization until a definitive decision is reached. It vigilantly monitors for any alterations in referrals that might lead to potential denials or financial write-offs, safeguarding against common pitfalls in the authorization process.

Bellin and Gundersen and Humata are expanding their focus to the Neurology department, aiming to replicate the success achieved in Radiology by enhancing efficiency and patient care in another critical service area.
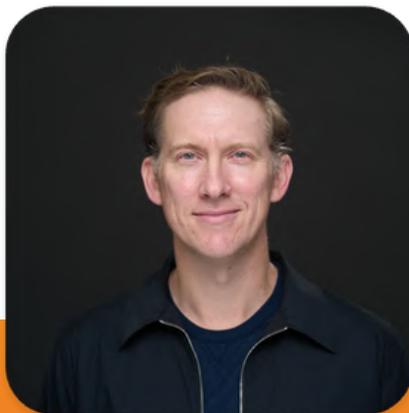
"I'm thrilled with the advancements we've realized through our collaboration with Bellin and Gundersen Health System. By integrating our AI technology, we've redefined the process for prior authorization submissions and the outcomes speak volumes. Our success goes beyond innovative technology; it's a testament to our joint commitment to leveraging AI for operational excellence and enhancing patient care."

- Jeremy Friese, Founder & CEO - Humata Health

Ready to see how Humata can solve your PA problem?
Contact us today at **info@humatahealth.com** for a free demo.