

Transforming the Enterprise via Epic eMPA-Driven Automation

Case Study

CentraCare and Humata Health partnered to eliminate administrative friction by deploying AI-driven prior authorization automation directly within Epic, transforming the technology into an automated, exception-based workflow.

The Challenge

CentraCare is a not-for-profit health system that has served Central Minnesota since 1995, and now operates 9 hospitals and more than 30 clinics as well as 220+ outreach locations, serving over 387,000 patients. With 10,600 employees and \$2.1 billion in net patient revenue, CentraCare is deeply committed to regional stewardship and population health – a mission it fulfills by delivering the latest clinical and technological advancements to the communities it serves.

CentraCare's focus is for all to live a healthy life and to encourage and inspire well-being. CentraCare's purpose: *We're here for your whole life – to listen then serve, to guide and heal – because health means everything.*

While CentraCare remained committed to delivering high-quality patient care, the administrative demands associated with prior authorizations became increasingly difficult to sustain. By 2024, a combination of mounting external forces and internal workflow limitations began to strain capacity.



Fragmented Workflows and Surging Prior Authorization Volume

A closer look at CentraCare's operational environment reveals several challenges that hindered scalability and threatened financial performance:



Prior Authorization Spike:

Between 2022 and 2024, the number of prior authorization requests doubled in Minnesota, placing substantial strain on providers.



Manual Workflows:

Like many large health systems, CentraCare operated in an environment where each payer maintained unique, frequently changing requirements and disparate portal layouts. Checking the status of prior authorization requests was a reactive and manual process that resulted in missed updates and denied claims. The lack of standardization and automation forced staff to navigate multiple external sites, creating a heavy administrative load and significant operational friction.



Documentation Gaps:

Because key approval and denial letters failed to sync with Epic, staff had to manually hunt down and retrieve documents across disparate payer portals. This constant manual intervention created redundant work, lengthened follow-up cycles, and slowed down total claims resolution – diverting staff focus away from proactive care coordination.



Scalability Risks:

Legacy tools failed to accurately identify prior authorization requirements without manual input. As volumes increased, this dependency on manual work threatened scalability, pulling skilled staff into repetitive data entry and tedious follow-up tasks.

The doubling of prior authorization volumes accelerated the need for operational modernization at CentraCare. Managing this influx through manual processes created unnecessary administrative friction for staff. Recognizing the need, the health system moved decisively to seek an automated, exception-based workflow integrated within Epic.

Selecting the Partner: **Built for Deep Integration, Built for Yes**

To ensure alignment between executive strategy and daily operations, CentraCare assembled a cross-functional evaluation team representing revenue cycle operations, financial clearance, patient access, information technology, security, and enterprise architecture. Together, these stakeholders assessed the solution's operational impact, security posture, and ability to integrate seamlessly within the existing Epic ecosystem.

The team launched a thorough evaluation process, comparing Humata's capabilities to those of other prior authorization vendors to ensure a future-proof choice.

The resulting business case for the partnership was built on four essential pillars:



Capacity Savings

Streamlining workflows to allow staff to focus on high-complexity cases rather than manual data entry.



Write-off Reduction

Minimizing denials caused by administrative errors, missed updates, or documentation gaps.



Clinical Velocity

Reducing the need for peer-to-peer reviews by ensuring payers receive comprehensive, high-quality clinical documentation on the first submission.



Commitment to Partnership Success

Driving long-term operational success with dedicated training and post-go-live support set Humata apart from other vendors.

Implementation Scope & Architecture: **Deep Epic Integration**

Following selection, CentraCare partnered with Humata Health to deploy an enterprise-wide authorization solution. The initial phase prioritized high-volume imaging and cardiology service lines to drive rapid initial value, while phases 2 and 3 scaled automation across additional medical, surgical, and therapy specialties to expand coverage.

PHASE 01

- Imaging
- Cardiology

PHASE 02

- Gastroenterology
- Behavioral Health
- Eye Surgeries
- OB/GYN
- Interventional Radiology
- Women's Health

PHASE 03

- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Sleep
- Colonoscopies
- EGD's

STATUS: 100% LIVE





Centralizing a Fragmented Ecosystem

The cornerstone of the solution is the creation of a unified environment that bridges the gap between the internal EHR and the external payer landscape. By utilizing 50+ Epic FHIR APIs, Humata enables a bi-directional flow of information, so that Epic remains the single source of truth while removing manual touchpoints from the workflow.

A critical component of the partnership was eliminating the need for staff to navigate disparate external environments. To solve this, Humata provided deep, automated connectivity across CentraCare's highest-volume payers and portals, including UHC, UMR, HealthPartners, Cohere, Availity, Carelon, and eviCore. This centralized access ensures that clinical and administrative data, including determination results and status updates, are synced directly back into the patient record.



Removing Manual Touchpoints through Intelligent Automation

While connectivity provides the right foundation, the true transformation at CentraCare is driven by the technology within that infrastructure. The solution embeds intelligence directly into the scheduling and referral process:

- **Autonomous Determination:** Immediately after a referral is created, Humata directly confirms authorization requirements with the payer based on the specific patient plan, CPT code, diagnosis, and facility location.
- **No Auth Required (NAR) Closure:** If the technology determines that an authorization is not required, the referral status is automatically updated in Epic. By auto-closing NARs, Humata eliminates thousands of manual touches for procedures that are already cleared – and documents the NAR result for future reference.
- **AI-Driven Clinical Bundling:** When an authorization is required, Humata guides specialists to specific medical necessity policies and codifies the necessary clinical documentation. Using AI to surface the right recommendations, the platform assembles a "submission-ready" clinical bundle of chart notes and imaging.
- **Multi-Channel Submission & Statusing:** Once the clinical bundle is curated, submissions are transmitted via API, eFax, or portal assistance. Humata then automatically pulls the determination, whether approved, pending, or denied, directly back into the Epic workqueue.
- **CPT Mismatch Technology:** This feature identifies likely inconsistencies between the initial medical order and the services eventually performed by evaluating clinical notes and mapping historical provider patterns. By anticipating these shifts, CentraCare can accelerate the authorization process even when specific CPT codes are absent from the original order. This approach improves overall submission accuracy by ensuring authorizations are aligned with actual clinical practice, significantly reducing the risk of retroactive denials.

The Results: Driving Operational Velocity

Over the first year of the partnership, the transition from manual, portal-dependent workflows to an automated, exception-based environment has stabilized CentraCare's revenue cycle against mounting authorization volumes. By automating manual tasks with AI, the Humata solution has unlocked substantial capacity gains and allowed CentraCare to shift its staff's focus from administrative friction to proactive exception management.

Cutting the Noise: Automated "No Auth Needed" Tracking

Humata's automated determination engine instantly filters out procedures that do not require prior authorization, preventing these cases from ever cluttering staff workqueues. 51% of cases were identified as "No Auth Needed" – drastically reducing the quantity of manual touches needed.

This feature instantly returned 27,591 determinations and eliminated 540+ hours of unnecessary submission work, allowing the team to focus strictly on cases requiring high-touch clinical review.



"51% of the volume that we process, we were able to determine through our automation that no auth was required. What that means is that we've saved our staff time from having to go to a portal... to know whether or not they needed to continue with a Prior Auth process."

— Julie Devore,
Senior Director Access Strategy & Ops

Accelerating Preparation: AI-Driven Clinical Bundling

Gathering clinical documentation used to be one of the most time-consuming parts of the submission process. With Humata, CentraCare has created over 24,000+ AI clinical bundles, with ~74% of those being actively utilized in submissions.

In total, clinical bundling has saved CentraCare 525 hours of clinical preparation time across 17,740 bundles:



As-Is Efficiency:

3,253 bundles were used exactly as-is, saving 3 minutes per case (163 hours total).



Refined with Speed:

14,487 bundles were utilized after a quick user tweak, saving 1.5 minutes per case (362 hours total).



Continuous Learning:

The AI and automations continue to optimize, with 81% of bundles currently refined by users, driving a 75% increase in touchless/low-edit bundles over the last 30 days.

Post-Authorization Monitoring & Denial Prevention

Humata enables CentraCare to stop potential revenue leakage at the source instead of waiting for surprise denials. Humata's post-authorization monitoring caught 269 flags after authorization was secured, routing each one for immediate re-review before a denial could occur.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The collective impact of CentraCare's transition to Humata represents substantial gains across quality, speed, and proactive risk mitigation:

Metric	Area of Impact	Result
First-Pass Approval Rate	Quality & Accuracy	98.6% (Humata-led submissions)
Total User Capacity Gained via Automation	Staff Productivity	950+ hours saved overall (~2 mins saved per case)
No Auth Needed (NAR) Rate	Workflow Efficiency	51% of cases auto-closed (saving 540+ hours)
Clinical Bundles Created and Utilized	Adoption & Scale	24,000+ AI bundles created (74% actively used in submissions)
Clinical Bundling Time Saved	Clinical Productivity	525 hours saved across 17,740 bundles
Post-Auth Flags Caught	Denial Prevention	269 potential denials averted prior to billing
Direct Submit (EviCore)	Submission Speed	+61 hours saved (~7 mins saved per case across 520 cases)

The Strategic Roadmap: **From Automated Tasks to Enterprise Velocity**

With the successful completion of the initial three phases – which brought AI-driven efficiencies to everything from imaging and cardiology to behavioral health and therapies – CentraCare is already accelerating its next wave of growth.



Immediate Expansion:

Work is already underway to onboard new service lines, including sleep studies, EGDs, and colonoscopies.



Next-Wave Scope Opportunities:

The automation framework will expand into neurology, general surgery, pain management, and additional procedural cases. This phase will also focus on defining the scope for Policy Match to digitize Medical Necessity determinations, close documentation gaps, and introduce VA portal pre-notifications for professional and hospital billing (PB/HB).



Advanced Clinical Authorization:

The roadmap expands into complex specialty areas, bringing automated support to both oncology and non-oncology infusion authorizations alongside Specialty Rx.

This rollout will ultimately extend automated efficiencies across most remaining procedural and series-based authorizations, such as long-term rehabilitation, requiring tracking over multiple clinical visits.



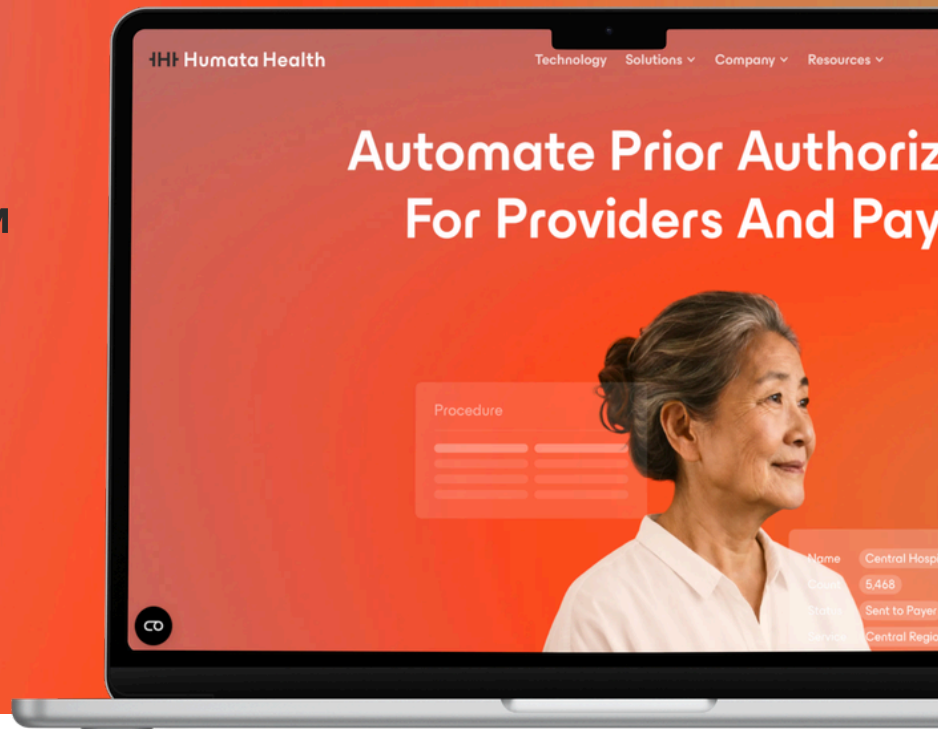
"I just want to say that your team, they are wonderful to work with...our teams are very engaged in those weekly meetings and the trainings and all the components...very happy with the results."

— Julie Devore, Senior Director Access Strategy and Operations

Built for Yes.™

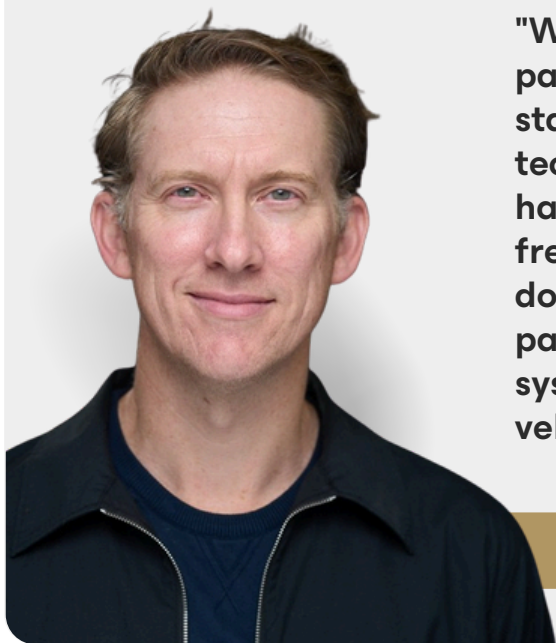
www.humatahealth.com

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can solve your PA problem?
Contact us today at
info@humatahealth.com
for a free demo.



The New Benchmark for **Prior Authorization**

With the successful completion of the initial three phases – which brought AI-driven efficiencies to everything from imaging and cardiology to behavioral health and therapies – CentraCare is already accelerating its next wave of growth.



"What makes CentraCare a standout partner is their refusal to accept the status quo. By embedding our technology deeply within Epic, they haven't just automated a task, they're freeing their clinicians to do what they do best: focus on patients. This partnership is a blueprint for how health systems can use AI to prioritize clinical velocity over administrative drag."

- Jeremy Frieze, Founder & CEO - Humata Health