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InterQual 2025: What's new

For nearly 50 years, hospitals, health plans and government agencies have trusted objective, evidence-based InterQual® content and technology solutions. These solutions support organizations in delivering appropriate, high-value care and managing precious, finite resources. As utilization management (UM) pioneers, we have deep expertise and understanding of the critical role that evidence-based medicine plays in an increasingly complex UM landscape.

InterQual 2025 reaffirms and showcases our commitment to delivering rigorously developed, unbiased criteria that is rooted in the latest clinical research. These enhancements support the delivery of appropriate care and a better patient experience through new criteria and functionality that help optimize safety, education and transparency. Our technology solutions bring artificial intelligence (AI) and automation into your workflow, reducing friction and connecting stakeholders to build a seamless and efficient ecosystem.

Right care, right setting, right time

Using data and evidence to determine the safest and most appropriate patient setting: With clinical advancements, regulatory changes and the consumer demand for a better patient experience, procedural care is increasingly shifting from the inpatient to the outpatient setting.[1,2,3] To aid organizations navigating this transition, InterQual setting determinations have been updated using code-level benchmarks to provide more accurate and detailed guidance.

Supporting medical necessity for skilled care: New pathways and Medicare policy notes have been added within the InterQual® Subacute and Skilled Nursing Criteria to support Medicare alignment for

maintenance therapy and skilled nursing. Additionally, content was added to differentiate custodial from skilled care to help strengthen medical necessity determinations.

Strengthening relationships through transparency, education and empathy

Expanded, patient-centric Decision Reasons content: Decision Reasons is a content add-on module that provides consumer-level patient education and decision-reason text when a clinical service may not be clinically appropriate. This content helps increase the efficiency of authoring member communications while driving transparency and promoting consistency. We recently conducted online qualitative research with a panel of health care consumers that confirmed they prefer personalized, detailed clinical information that is communicated in an empathetic and straightforward manner. Feedback also highlighted that patients struggle with UM-specific concepts like "Observation" and "Inpatient" status, which can lead to increased frustration and abrasion.

With this in mind, all Decision Reasons content has been updated to ensure that patients will have more insight into the information that was considered during this decision-making process.

Decision Reasons content for the InterQual® Acute Adult Criteria and InterQual® Acute Pediatric Criteria has been enhanced to provide education on the differences between Observation and Inpatient levels of care based on their plan of care. The Decision Reasons content for the InterQual® Procedures Criteria has also been expanded to cover 60 new subsets, capturing more than 80% of the top utilization.

In addition to these updates, we're pleased to release new Decision Reasons for the InterQual® Adult and Geriatric Psychiatry Criteria, InterQual® Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Criteria, InterQual® Substance Use Disorders Criteria, InterQual® Behavioral Health Services Criteria, Medicare Behavioral Health Navigator and Medicare Durable Medical Equipment Navigator.

Our focus on delivering transparency to patients through our Decision Reasons content was a key factor in earning our Health Content Provider certification from URAC, an independent leader in promoting health care quality and patient safety through renowned accreditation programs. We are immensely proud of this recent designation, which demonstrates that our organization creates quality health content that is both evidence-based and consumer-safe.

Optimizing efficiency and connectivity with AI and automation

New AI-enabled case stratification solution: Case Intelligence, our newly released case stratification solution, identifies the likelihood of inpatient admission for a patient and based on your organization's customized workflows, recommends appropriate next steps. This enables UM teams to efficiently prioritize first- and second-level reviews, optimize physician advisor time and consistently take action.

Expanded review automation: The InterQual® AutoReview medical review solution has expanded to cover 7 additional subsets, covering over 90% of condition-specific Episode Day 1 reviews. This expansion significantly reduces administrative burden, generates time savings and enhances review accuracy and trust by embedding clinical data directly from the EHR.

Streamlining prior authorization and supporting regulatory alignment: As part of our ongoing dedication to enhancing health care efficiency and effectiveness, we are actively developing innovative solutions that leverage AI and automation to enable fast, efficient information gathering and decision-making. These solutions streamline the prior authorization process and enable compliance with the DaVinci Burden Reduction DTR API and reduced turnaround times mandated by the CMS-0057F final rule as well as state laws. As the developers of industry-trusted, evidence-based criteria, combined with deep technical expertise, we are committed to ensuring our tools are reliable and effective. Contact your Optum representative to learn more.

Improving workflows with "Criteria Not Met" capability in nested decision tree content: To improve internal physician review, escalation and Decision Reasons workflows, reviewers can now explicitly indicate that an individual criteria point is not satisfied by selecting an "X" button. This feature also gives users the flexibility to choose whether criteria marked as "Not Met" are included in summary outputs.

Driving accuracy with "auto-direct" functionality in Medicare Content Navigator: To support consistent and accurate use of coverage determinations and to help with tracking and auditing, reviewers are now automatically directed to the appropriate National Coverage Determination (NCD) or Local Coverage Determination (LCD)/Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC) based on the date and location of service. The NCD or LCD/MAC number is also now included in the review summary.

Education and support

Introducing InterQual Community: We're pleased to introduce the InterQual Community, an easily accessible one-stop forum for all InterQual customers. This platform lets you ask questions, access clinical resources, participate in events, join "Increase Your IQ" webinars and contact support through the Customer Care Hub. It's seamlessly integrated into all InterQual cloud solutions, providing you with the resources and support you need, right at your fingertips.

ASAM-developed training courses available through Optum: Third and fourth edition on-demand education courses for The ASAM Criteria®, developed directly by ASAM, are now available. Accessible through the InterQual® Learning Management System, these courses offer support for clients who may want or be required by state regulations to receive training directly from medical societies.

New foundational reviewer certification: As a fundamental starting point for UM reviewers, the InterQual® Certified Reviewer program certifies staff who demonstrate appropriate and consistent application of the InterQual criteria, helping organizations develop high-quality reviewers and enhance clinical decision-making.

Accessing InterQual 2025

InterQual 2025 criteria is instantly available in all cloud applications upon release, requiring no installation. Users can promptly evaluate the new criteria and choose when to enable it for their organization's use.

For support-related questions:

Support portal: customercare.optum.com
Email: InterQualSupport@optum.com
Call: 1-800-274-8374

The ASAM Criteria is a registered trademark of the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

1. Advisory Board. Charted: Outpatient procedure volumes are on the rise. March 17, 2023.
2. Beckmann S, Hula N. Site-of-care shifts: Healthcare's $50B opportunity. Advisory Board. June 27, 2024.
3. McKinsey & Company. Walking out of the hospital: The continued rise of ambulatory care and how to take advantage of it. Sept. 18, 2020.

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