

When complex cases require specialized expertise: validating medical necessity in cardiac ablations

The challenge

A large health plan identified a potential overutilization pattern: one physician was frequently adding cavotricuspid isthmus (CTI) ablation to atrial fibrillation procedures—an add-on only supported in select clinical scenarios.

The plan faced two key limitations:

- + Clinical criteria were too broad to determine medical necessity at a case level
- + Lack of electrophysiology sub-specialty expertise to accurately assess these complex cases

As a result, the plan needed an independent specialty-matched reviewer to evaluate whether these procedures were clinically justified.

The solution

Extended Clinical Solutions (ECS), a new offering from EviCore by Evernorth, conducted a targeted clinical audit of 33 cases, led by a board-certified electrophysiologist.

Because the health plan already had an ECS relationship, the review began immediately with no procurement delays.


The specialist:


- + Reviewed each case against current guidelines and real-world practice
- + Assessed medical necessity at the individual case level
- + Collaborated directly with the plan's clinical leadership to discuss findings and nuances

The impact

33 
cardiac ablation cases reviewed

44% 
of CTI add-ons lacked clinical support

18 
included CTI ablation as an add-on procedure

5 
business days to complete the review (vs. typical 30-day turnaround)

The findings confirmed the plan's concerns: Nearly half of reviewed add-on procedures lacked clinical justification.

ECS delivered:

- + Case-level determinations with detailed clinical rationale
- + Peer-reviewed supporting references
- + A clear executive summary highlighting patterns and risks

This enabled leadership to quickly understand both individual decisions and broader utilization trends.

Why it matters

This engagement enabled the health plan to move from suspicion to defensible action.

With ECS support, the plan was able to:



Identify where practice deviated from evidence-based standards



Support determinations with robust clinical documentation



Engage providers with greater confidence and specificity



Strengthen positioning for audits, appeals and disputes

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ECS fills a critical gap where generalist reviews and standard criteria fall short, delivering targeted expertise for complex clinical questions, without adding operational burden.



ABOUT ECS

Extended Clinical Solutions from EviCore by Evernorth provides specialty-matched clinical review across 80+ specialties, supporting health plans with case reviews, appeals, hearings, arbitrations, clinical policy support and customized audit support. ECS combines specialized insight, speed and flexibility to help plans address nuanced clinical challenges with confidence.