



STAR Clinical Review System

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is STAR?

Smart Technology Authorization Request (STAR) is a simpler, faster, more streamlined authorization process that can deliver behavioral health approvals in real time, freeing up your time. STAR was developed with input and testing from behavioral health facilities and their staff.

2. How is STAR different?

STAR dramatically reduces the time you spend seeking clinical authorizations. The system asks fewer, more intelligent questions and utilizes point-and-click information gathering to collect diagnostic information more efficiently. Approvals often are given in real time. When additional details are needed, a highly trained Optum® care advocate is available 24/7 to help, via the live-chat function or by phone.

3. How long do authorizations take, using STAR?

STAR submissions take less than 10 minutes to enter, and about 50 percent are approved in real time. Even when an Optum care advocate collects additional clarifying information via chat, STAR takes 30 percent less time on average than a standard clinical review.¹

4. How does STAR work?

After signing in to the Optum 24/7 Provider Express portal, type in your provider ID, the patient's member ID, the diagnosis and the level of care being requested. STAR confirms the patient's eligibility, benefits and demographic information, saving you time on data entry.

STAR then asks a limited number of relevant questions about the patient's symptoms and severity, patient risks and the proposed treatment. It compares the submitted information with industry-recognized guidelines and best practices. In many cases, you'll receive authorization within seconds.

In some cases, STAR may transfer you to an Optum care advocate, who'll collect more specific information. This happens via STAR's built-in chat function, or by phone if preferred, and it takes only a few minutes.

5. What if I need or want to provide more information?

The good news is that you don't need to provide extensive information to justify your request. STAR is designed to process approvals using minimal information and staff time. That said, our Optum care advocates are available to assist and answer questions around-the-clock, by live-chat or phone.

6. Can STAR be used for both initial and concurrent authorization requests?

Yes, STAR can be used for both, and regardless of whether those requests are for inpatient care, residential treatment or partial hospitalization.

7. Can everyone use STAR?

For now, STAR is available to Optum-contracted behavioral health facilities that offer inpatient, residential or partial levels of care. We plan to make the system available to non-contracted professionals and facilities in the future.

8. When can I start using STAR?

As soon as you or your staff complete the self-paced, online training module. Keep in mind that 60 minutes of training will save you hours over doing things “the old way.”

- First, sign up at learn.optum.com/redeem/star-um. That’s just five minutes.
- Next, get trained.

Once you are registered, you can return to the training module at learn.optum.com/learn/sign_in any time. It’s easy.

After you’ve completed formal training, STAR will be automatically displayed when you log onto providerexpress.com. Just click Review Online, under Authorizations.

If you have additional questions or feedback to share, please contact your Optum Behavioral Health provider relations advocate.

¹ Optum STAR key metrics program data from in-network facilities authorizing behavioral health treatment admissions to inpatient, residential and partial hospital levels of care for members from May 2021 to July 2021, McCarthy, August 2021.



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