



Annual Prior Authorization Health Equity Analysis

Essence Healthcare - 2024

6-10-2025



Table of Contents

Overview 2

Region: Saint Louis Metropolitan Area 3

 Essence Advantage - St Louis Metro..... 3

 Essence Advantage Plus - St Louis Metro 3

 Essence Advantage Select - St Louis Metro 4

 Essence Advantage Choice - St Louis Metro 4

 Essence Advantage Choice Plus - St Louis Metro..... 5

Region: Boone and Callaway Counties (Central Missouri)..... 6

 Essence Advantage - Boone Callaway 6

 Essence Advantage Choice - Boone Callaway 6

Region: Southwestern Missouri and Northwestern Arkansas..... 7

 Essence Advantage - SW Missouri NW Arkansas 7

 Essence Advantage Choice - SW Missouri NW Arkansas 7

Region: Louisville and Lexington (Kentucky) 8

 Essence Advantage - Louisville Lexington..... 8

 Essence Advantage Choice - Louisville Lexington 8

Region: Little Rock (Arkansas)..... 9

 Essence Advantage - Little Rock..... 9

 Essence Advantage Choice - Little Rock..... 9

Region: Cincinnati Metropolitan Area 10

 Essence Advantage - Cinci Metro KY IN..... 10

 Essence Advantage Choice - Cinci Metro KY IN..... 10

 Essence Advantage - Cinci Metro OH..... 11

 Essence Advantage Choice - Cinci Metro OH 11

Overview

Consistent with national requirements from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Essence Healthcare has conducted a detailed analysis of our prior authorization data to examine trends among people with one or more social risk factors. Specifically, this report describes aspects of the prior authorization process and its outcomes in individuals with disability or low-income status, including timeframes for decisions, rates of approvals and denials, and extensions.

The methodology for this report meets all requirements set forth by CMS. It compares data on prior authorizations between members with CMS-defined social risk factors and those without. CMS defines the social needs cohort in this context as members who met one or more of the following criteria: 1) receipt of the low-income subsidy, 2) being dually eligible for both Medicaid Medicare and Medicaid, or 3) disability status. Cases were included if they had a decision rendered between January 1 and December 31, 2024.

Our analysis compares the percentage rates of the following measures at the plan level between the cohort of members with social risks and those without (excluding medications).

- The percentage of **standard prior authorization requests** that are approved and denied
- The percentage of **appealed, extended, and expedited prior authorization requests** that were approved and denied
- The average and median **time to determination for standard authorizations**
- The average and median **time to decision for expedited authorizations**

Region: Saint Louis Metropolitan Area

Essence Advantage - St Louis Metro

Table 1 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage - St Louis Metro (H2610005)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	85.1%	87.3%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	14.9%	12.7%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	1.1%	0.8%
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	78.0%	84.6%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	22.0%	15.4%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	Same Day	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	1.0 day(s)	Same Day
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	Same Day	Same Day

Based on 11,067 authorizations (599 expedited) for 6,189 distinct members (1,044 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 239 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Essence Advantage Plus - St Louis Metro

Table 2 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage Plus - St Louis Metro (H2610006)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	90.2%	85.3%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	9.8%	14.7%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	2.5%	1.2%
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	77.8%	88.9%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	22.2%	11.1%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	Same Day	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	Same Day	1.0 day(s)
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	Same Day	Same Day

Based on 541 authorizations (27 expedited) for 269 distinct members (62 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 20 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Essence Advantage Select - St Louis Metro

Table 3 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage Select - St Louis Metro (H2610016)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	83.0%	86.5%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	17.0%	13.5%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	1.0%	0.6%
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	72.5%	87.3%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	27.5%	12.7%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	Same Day	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	1.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	Same Day	Same Day

Based on 7,109 authorizations (264 expedited) for 4,139 distinct members (818 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 109 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Essence Advantage Choice - St Louis Metro

Table 4 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage Choice - St Louis Metro (H6200001)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	86.7%	86.7%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	13.3%	13.3%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	0.2%	0.3%
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	68.4%	75.6%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	31.6%	24.4%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	Same Day	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	1.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	1.0 day(s)	Same Day

Based on 2,865 authorizations (109 expedited) for 1,556 distinct members (242 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 26 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Essence Advantage Choice Plus - St Louis Metro

Table 5 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage Choice Plus - St Louis Metro (H6200002)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	83.2%	84.0%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	16.8%	16.0%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	0.4%	0.7%
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	53.1%	74.4%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	46.9%	25.6%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	Same Day	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	1.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	1.0 day(s)	Same Day

Based on 3,870 authorizations (153 expedited) for 1,988 distinct members (364 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 61 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Region: Boone and Callaway Counties (Central Missouri)

Essence Advantage - Boone Callaway

Table 6 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage - Boone Callaway (H2610011)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	93.0%	88.9%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	7.0%	11.1%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	2.3%	1.0%
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	100.0%	81.8%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	0.0%	18.2%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	2.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	3.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	3.0 day(s)	Same Day

Based on 254 authorizations (12 expedited) for 147 distinct members (21 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 3 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Essence Advantage Choice - Boone Callaway

Table 7 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage Choice - Boone Callaway (H6200003)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	100.0%	85.7%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	0.0%	14.3%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	N/A	N/A
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	N/A	N/A
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	N/A	N/A
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	Same Day	Same Day
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	Same Day	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	N/A
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	N/A

Based on 86 authorizations (0 expedited) for 49 distinct members (2 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 1 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Region: Southwestern Missouri and Northwestern Arkansas

Essence Advantage - SW Missouri NW Arkansas

Table 8 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage - SW Missouri NW Arkansas (H2610015)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	83.3%	80.8%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	16.7%	19.2%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	N/A	N/A
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	0.0%	60.0%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	100.0%	40.0%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	Same Day	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	Same Day	Same Day
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	Same Day	Same Day

Based on 129 authorizations (6 expedited) for 77 distinct members (18 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 1 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Essence Advantage Choice - SW Missouri NW Arkansas

Table 9 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage Choice - SW Missouri NW Arkansas (H6200004)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	90.0%	78.2%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	10.0%	21.8%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	N/A	N/A
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	N/A	40.0%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	N/A	60.0%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	Same Day	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	1.0 day(s)
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	1.0 day(s)

Based on 312 authorizations (15 expedited) for 160 distinct members (23 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 3 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Region: Louisville and Lexington (Kentucky)

Essence Advantage - Louisville Lexington

Table 10 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage - Louisville Lexington (H2610021)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	89.7%	79.2%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	10.3%	20.8%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	2.9%	0.0%
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	50.0%	81.8%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	50.0%	18.2%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	2.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	Same Day	1.0 day(s)
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	Same Day	1.0 day(s)
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	Same Day	1.0 day(s)

Based on 123 authorizations (17 expedited) for 73 distinct members (17 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 2 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Essence Advantage Choice - Louisville Lexington

Table 11 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage Choice - Louisville Lexington (H6200006)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	87.2%	89.6%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	12.8%	10.4%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	4.4%	0.5%
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	83.3%	94.4%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	16.7%	5.6%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	2.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	5.0 day(s)	Same Day
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	1.0 day(s)	Same Day

Based on 256 authorizations (24 expedited) for 161 distinct members (28 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 6 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.



Region: Little Rock (Arkansas)

Essence Advantage - Little Rock

Table 12 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage - Little Rock (H2610019)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	N/A	66.7%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	N/A	33.3%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	N/A	N/A
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	N/A	N/A
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	N/A	N/A
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	N/A	1.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	N/A	1.0 day(s)
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	N/A
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	N/A

Based on 12 authorizations (0 expedited) for 7 distinct members (0 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 0 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Essence Advantage Choice - Little Rock

Table 13 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage Choice - Little Rock (H6200005)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	66.7%	90.7%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	33.3%	9.3%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	N/A	N/A
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	100.0%	66.7%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	0.0%	33.3%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	3.0 day(s)	2.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	3.0 day(s)	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	Same Day	Same Day
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	Same Day	Same Day

Based on 70 authorizations (7 expedited) for 32 distinct members (6 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 0 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.



Region: Cincinnati Metropolitan Area

Essence Advantage - Cinci Metro KY IN

Table 14 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage - Cinci Metro KY IN (H2610023)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	N/A	69.2%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	N/A	30.8%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	N/A	N/A
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	N/A	80.0%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	N/A	20.0%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	N/A	2.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	N/A	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	Same Day
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	Same Day

Based on 44 authorizations (5 expedited) for 24 distinct members (0 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 3 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Essence Advantage Choice - Cinci Metro KY IN

Table 15 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage Choice - Cinci Metro KY IN (H6200007)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	N/A	92.5%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	N/A	7.5%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	N/A	N/A
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	N/A	50.0%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	N/A	50.0%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	N/A	1.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	N/A	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	1.0 day(s)
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	1.0 day(s)

Based on 46 authorizations (6 expedited) for 25 distinct members (0 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 1 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.



Essence Advantage - Cinci Metro OH

Table 16 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage - Cinci Metro OH (H3189001)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	0.0%	85.7%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	100.0%	14.3%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	N/A	N/A
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	N/A	100.0%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	N/A	0.0%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	8.0 day(s)	2.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	8.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	1.0 day(s)
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	1.0 day(s)

Based on 23 authorizations (1 expedited) for 12 distinct members (1 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 1 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

Essence Advantage Choice - Cinci Metro OH

Table 17 Equity Analysis for Plan: Essence Advantage Choice - Cinci Metro OH (H4620001)

EQUITY METRIC	AT-RISK MEMBERS	OTHER MEMBERS
Item 1: Approved Standard Requests	81.8%	88.6%
Item 2: Denied Standard Requests	18.2%	11.4%
Item 3: Standard Requests Approved After Appeal	N/A	N/A
Item 4: Timeframe Extended then Request Approved	N/A	N/A
Item 5: Approved Expedited Requests	N/A	100.0%
Item 6: Denied Expedited Requests	N/A	0.0%
Item 7a: Average Time to Decision for Standard Requests	2.0 day(s)	1.0 day(s)
Item 7b: Median Time to Decision for Standard Requests	1.0 day(s)	Same Day
Item 8a: Average Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	Same Day
Item 8b: Median Time to Decision for Expedited Requests	N/A	Same Day

Based on 48 authorizations (2 expedited) for 33 distinct members (5 "at-risk"). The plan rendered 0 appeal decision(s) and granted 0 extensions.

