



Case Study

Improving Retina Authorization Performance & Treatment Readiness

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SunKnowledge was approached by a premier, multisite, retina-only specialty practice, serving patients across Tennessee, Georgia, and Virginia. It is widely recognized for comprehensive medical and surgical retina care for conditions such as age-related macular degeneration, diabetic macular edema, retinal vein occlusion, and other complex vitreoretinal diseases. With more than 20 locations and a team of experienced retina specialists and surgeons, the practice combines clinical excellence, patient-centered care, and active clinical research.

As patient volumes and therapeutic complexity increased, particularly with high-cost buy-and-bill biologics such as Eylea® / Eylea HD® and Vabysmo®, the practice sought to improve authorization readiness, reduce payer friction, and ensure predictable access to premium therapies without adding staff burden. Partnering with SunKnowledge, it deployed a retina-specific revenue cycle and authorization strategy focused on early visibility, first-pass accuracy, and operational stability. Analysis of 24,642 appointments (August–December 2025) showed measurable gains in authorization clearance, drug approvals, and clinic efficiency, enabling smoother operations and more consistent, on-time treatment for retinal patients.

IMPROVEMENTS AT A GLANCE

3x

Improvement in auth completion lead-time (before DOS)

81%

Decline in escalations, reducing staff rework and delays

90%

Authorization clearance rate achieved and sustained

CHALLENGES

- ❶ Growing patient volumes and increasing therapeutic complexity, driven by expanded use of high-cost buy-and-bill biologics (Eylea® / Eylea HD®, Vabysmo®).
- ❷ Inconsistent authorization readiness leading to visit-day uncertainty and payer back-and-forth.
- ❸ High escalation and duplicate rates creating rework for clinic, nursing, and front-desk staff.
- ❹ Limited advance visibility into authorization status, restricting drug ordering and staffing predictability.
- ❺ Elevated denial risk for newer, high-scrutiny biologics with evolving payer rules.

ANALYSIS AND APPROACH

Step 1: Baseline & SLA Definition

- Analyzed real appointment-level production data (24,642 visits; Aug–Dec 2025).
- Established clearance, escalation, and lead-time baselines.
- Defined advance-readiness targets to sharply reduce visit-day risk.

Step 2: Drug-Specific Specialization

- Built authorization playbooks for high-impact biologics (Eylea HD®, Vabysmo®).
- Aligned documentation and submission workflows to payer-specific requirements.
- Reduced variability and first-pass failures for premium therapies.

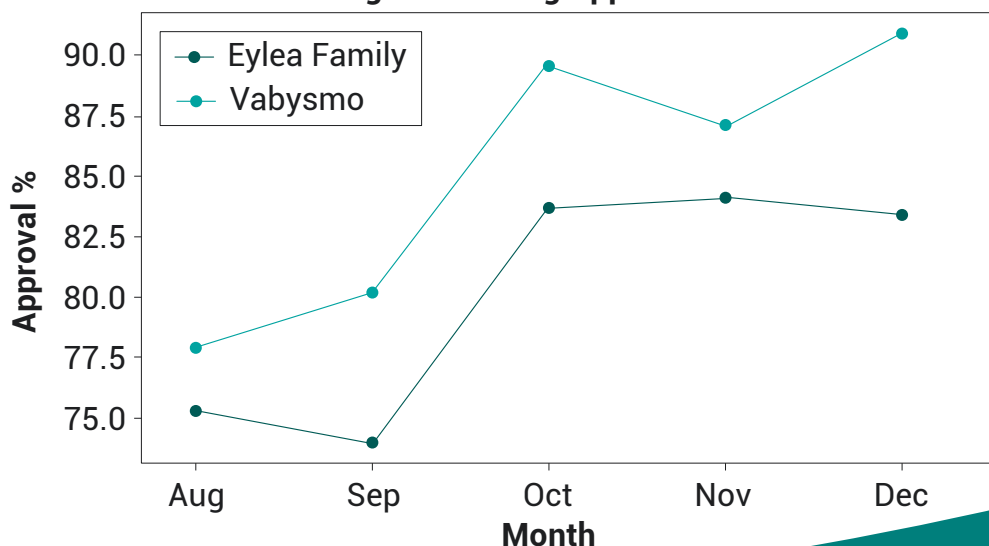
Step 3: Early-Cycle Case Pulls & Intake Control

- Implemented early-cycle work pulls targeting ≥ 14 -day lead time.
- Prioritized high-cost drug cases for accelerated readiness.
- Suppressed duplicate submissions using portal logic and workflow gating.

Step 4: Payer Optimization & Governance

- Optimized payer-portal workflows to minimize manual rework.
- Introduced weekly performance scorecards tied to clinic-impact KPIs (not vanity metrics).
- Monitored authorization clearance, escalations, and drug-specific approval rates.

High-Cost Drug Approval Rates



Metric	Before Optimization	After Optimization	Impact
Authorization Clearance	~82% (Unstable)	88-90% (Sustained)	Fewer day-of-service reschedules; predictable schedules
Escalations	187 / month	35/month (-81%)	Reduced staff rework and payer callbacks
Median Lead Time	6 days	17-18 days	Near-tripled advance visibility; better drug ordering
Eylea® Approval Rate	~75%	83%+	Fewer AMD/DME treatment delays
Vabysmo® Approval Rate	~78%	>90%	High reliability for newer biologics
Clinic Experience	Reactive, high rework	Predictable, low friction	Smoother operations and staff relief

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✔ Drug specific authorization playbooks (Eylea HD, Vabysmo)
- ✔ Early cycle case pulls targeting ≥14 day lead time
- ✔ Payer portal optimization & duplicate suppression logic
- ✔ Weekly scorecards aligned to clinic impact KPIs, not vanity metrics

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS



Clear SLA & Metrics

- Advance authorization-readiness targets.
- Monthly clearance and lead-time tracking.



Workflow Design

- Drug-specific playbooks for Eylea HD® and Vabysmo®.
- Early-cycle work pulls and prioritization of premium biologics.



Live Visibility & Control

- Ongoing monitoring of escalations, duplicates, and clearance trends.
- Scorecards aligned to clinic and treatment-readiness outcomes.



Performance & Knowledge

- Payer-portal optimization.
- Continuous tuning of documentation and submission standards.
- KPI-driven performance governance.

CONCLUSION

This case study illustrates how SunKnowledge transforms retina authorization operations from a reactive, visit-day risk model into a predictable, data-driven system. The result is fewer treatment delays, reduced staff burden, and stronger financial protection for high-cost biologics.



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