



UNDERWRITING

# Predictability over speed

Complex case underwriting

# The real problem with underwriting isn't speed. It's inconsistency.

Life insurance underwriting has never had more data, automation, or technology at its disposal. Yet for BGAs and advisors working on complex and large cases, the experience often feels less predictable than ever.

Similar cases receive different outcomes across carriers. Decisions arrive late in the process. Advisors are left managing uncertainty rather than guiding clients with confidence.

The industry's pursuit of speed has solved one problem while creating another. What complex cases require most is not faster underwriting, but clearer rules and more consistent decision-making.

At Banner Life Insurance Company, underwriting is built around that belief.

## Predictability comes from structure, not guesswork

Complex cases are not unpredictable by nature. They become unpredictable when underwriting lacks consistency, governance, or clear escalation paths.

Banner Life's underwriting approach is designed to reduce that uncertainty by applying structured intelligence at every stage of the process. Clear rules guide decisions wherever possible. Human judgment is applied where complexity demands

The goal is not to oversimplify complex cases. It is to make outcomes easier to anticipate and explain.

it. And specialization increases as risk and case size increase.

## A rules-based underwriting system

At its core, Banner Life underwriting follows a consistent operational model.

We evaluate traditional and electronic medical records, lifestyle factors, predictive data, and financial documentation to form a holistic view of risk. This evidence-based foundation allows informal pre-assessments and formal underwriting decisions to align more closely, reducing late-stage surprises.

This structure gives our partners and their advisors the ability to set clearer expectations with clients and navigate complex cases with greater confidence.

## When complexity increases, so does human judgment

Rules alone are not enough for complex risk. That's why Banner Life applies human expertise intentionally and consistently as cases become more nuanced.

## No automatic declines at higher face amounts

For cases with face amounts of \$2 million and above, there are no automatic declines or postponements. Every case is reviewed by an underwriter before a decision is made.

This ensures that applicants with layered complexity — large face amounts, business needs, and medical histories — are never reduced to automated outcomes when the stakes are high.

## Dedicated routing for large cases

As case size increases, underwriting specialization becomes critical.

Banner Life offers exclusive [Large Case Underwriting support](#) for:

- \$5 million and above in face amount, or
- \$10,000 and above in annual premium

These cases are routed to a dedicated Large Case Underwriting Team, separate from standard underwriting operations.

This team includes:

- Eight senior underwriters, each with over 15 years of brokerage underwriting experience
- Authority to sign off on cases up to \$15 million
- A single underwriting contact who manages the case from submission through offer
- Direct, proactive communication and transparent explanations of medical and financial decisions

This is not additional attention layered onto standard workflows. It is a distinct underwriting lane designed specifically for large and high-impact cases.

## Fairness through consistent pricing logic

Predictable underwriting also depends on predictable pricing.

When table ratings apply, Banner Life calculates premiums using Standard Plus rates rather than Standard rates. This pricing baseline helps ensure that complexity does not automatically translate into disproportionate cost.

In addition, Banner Life applies a rules-based [credit program](#) that allows applicants classified as Standard or better to improve by one class when objective criteria are met. This approach rewards favorable evidence rather than penalizing complexity.

## Evaluating risk holistically, not diagnostically

Complex medical histories are rarely defined by a single condition. That's why Banner Life uses a comorbidity ([blended impairment](#)) approach rather than stacking ratings.

Risk is evaluated based on underlying drivers and stability, not the number of diagnoses listed on an application. This approach allows multiple impairments to be considered together instead of compounding penalties.

These are not guarantees. They are reflections of how modern risk is assessed when evidence supports it.

Over time, this evidence-based framework has created clear areas of underwriting strength. Certain conditions, when well-controlled and stable, are consistently evaluated more favorably based on experience and data. These include examples such as controlled [sleep apnea](#), family histories of non-hereditary cancer, high-functioning autism, and stable [mental health](#) conditions.

## Faster insight without guesswork

To support better planning and fewer wasted cycles, Banner Life encourages early engagement through its [Quick Quote](#) process.

Pre-assessment requests are generally reviewed within 48 hours, providing transparent guidance that helps advisors set expectations before formal submission. This upfront clarity reduces unnecessary back-and-forth and aligns underwriting outcomes more closely with early conversations.

## Business underwriting built for modern reality

Business cases introduce additional complexity, particularly when financial justification and valuation are involved. Banner Life has updated its financial underwriting rules to reflect how businesses operate today.

This includes:

- Flexible financial justification for high-income earners and executives
- Key person multipliers up to 20x income for applicants under age 65
- Simplified financial reviews for SBA 7(a) loans and large, pre-approved loans
- Reduced loan term requirements, now seven years instead of ten for collateral assignments

These updates are designed to reduce friction while maintaining underwriting discipline.

#### Using automation where it adds the most value

Accelerated underwriting plays an important role in the overall system. Banner Life supports accelerated underwriting up to \$4 million in face amount for eligible applicants, with many cases receiving near-instant decisions.

#### Automation supports the system. It does not replace it.

By applying clear evidence-based pathways to straightforward cases, underwriting experts are able to focus more time and attention on applications that require deeper analysis and judgment.

#### A smarter standard for complex cases

Complex cases don't fail because underwriting is difficult. They fail when underwriting is inconsistent.

By combining clear rules, structured escalation, and dedicated teams, Banner Life has built an underwriting system that delivers more predictable outcomes for BGAs, advisors, and their clients.

Collaboration and human decision-making further strengthen this system. But it all starts with intelligent insights and underwriting rules advisors can trust.

# Start the conversation early.

Complex cases benefit from clarity before submission. Connect with your Banner Life team to discuss pre-assessments, large cases, or business needs and set expectations with confidence from the start.

[Reach out to your team →](#)

[Explore resources →](#)

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