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The Case Management Society of America

Backgrounder

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Founded in 1990, the Case Management Society of America (CMSA) has grown to be the leading international, non-profit association dedicated to the support and development of the profession of case management. It is based in Little Rock, Ark., and serves more than 8,200 members, 15,000 member subscribers, and 65 chapters through educational forums, networking opportunities, legislative advocacy and establishing standards to advance the profession.

Its leadership programs, educational forums, and breadth of tools and resources enable case management professionals to ensure more positive outcomes for individual patients' healthcare needs. Case management professionals help patients get healthier, faster; and help curtail the exorbitant costs that too often afflict the nation's health care system. To further the professional knowledge and career opportunities of its members, CMSA also offers a number of accreditation programs.

Mission

CMSA seeks to advance the growth, productivity and efficiency of case management, helping patients reach optimum outcomes while supporting the needs of those involved in its practice. Part of its charter has always been to illuminate the practice itself: the assessment, planning, facilitation and advocacy of each individual patient's healthcare needs, which involves effective communication and participation among different types

of health care professionals to ensure that such goals are met in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Management and Staff

CMSA is guided by a 13-person elected board of directors comprised of professionals from throughout the U.S. It has 20 full- and part-time staff members based in Little Rock, Ark., including specialists in information systems, programs, special events, accounting and member services.

History

Healthcare continues to evolve as a more and more prominent issue in the minds of many. Studies show it now trails only terror/security and the economy among Americans' chief concerns. As an integral part of the healthcare industry, the Case Management Society of America has been deeply involved in both tackling fundamental case issues and advocating for innovative change since 1990, originally as the American Society of Case Management Professionals (ASCMP), and as CMSA starting a year later. It was clear to the society's founders that a professional organization was necessary to not only better help patients reach optimum health, but also ensure that the medical route they take is prompt and cost-efficient.

The society's annual conference and exposition, which now draws more than 2,000 case management professionals, premiered in 1991, and soon became the industry's leading venue for educational programs, networking opportunities and a valuable marketplace. In 1995, CMSA published the first industry standards: *The Standards of Practice for Case Management* (revised in 2002) and *Ethical Statement on Case Management Practice*. These works provide a responsible roadmap for case management professionals to best care for patients, while simultaneously turning the many aspects of their care into a streamlined, cost-effective process.

More recently, CMSA established the *Council for Case Management Accountability* (CCMA). This group is chartered with demonstrating the value of case management in all cycles of the healthcare process, from patient to caregiver, payer to purchaser. The CCMA provides examples of case management standards that allow case managers to best measure, evaluate and report positive outcomes. With input from the council, CMSA recently introduced *CMAG-1* (Case Management Adherence Guidelines) in June 2004. The guidelines outline and detail the different factors involved in medication adherence, and provide a valuable resource for case management professionals to help patients stick to their prescribed medication therapies.

The Profession

Case management is more important than ever before. Because of escalating costs, the aging of the population and other factors, better management of healthcare toward more cost-effective outcomes is a topic of conversation from local coffee shops to Capitol Hill. Technically, case management isn't a profession in itself. It has evolved as an area of practice and unifying factor within a number of medical professions: doctors, nurses, social workers, administrators and others. Case management professionals advocate for the needs of patients, assuring that individual cases are promptly attended to up and down the healthcare chain. Ultimately, the reward is a healthier population and a more affordable health care system.

It can, however, be a complex profession. No two patients are alike, so each case is inherently unique. And it requires a basic knowledge of individual differences that arise through cultural, socio-economic, ethnic and other factors. Case management professionals look after the health concerns of those with drug or alcohol abuse problems, people who live on the street, and families from foreign countries where both social and government institutions are regarded with distrust. They also manage the healthcare needs of all generations, including aging populations that find it continually more difficult to look after themselves. Case management professionals pay strict attention to a patient's individual needs, and make sure patients follow medication, dietary and

exercise recommendations during their period of treatment. This is an ever-challenging process when considering the administrative depth and breadth of the healthcare system and the fact that numerous individuals may be intricately involved in a single case. But success in the endeavor is imperative; it may be the difference between life and death.

The Challenges

Ensuring that patients follow doctors' recommendations, including medication therapies, is significant. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), complications resulting from patients' failure to take prescribed medication as directed have alarmingly reached the fourth highest mortality rate – more than 125,000 deaths in the U.S. alone each year – trailing only heart disease, cancer and stroke.

Not only is the mortality rate of non-adherence rather shocking, but so are the significant costs it adds to the U.S. healthcare system – an estimated \$100 billion annually. The amount may be best understood when considering the AHA's findings that fewer than half of all Americans take their medications as prescribed – nearly a quarter of all patients never begin taking their medications, while a higher percentage stop taking them during some point in their medication therapy. Moreover, non-adherence for patients with high-risk and costly illnesses like HIV infection or schizophrenia can be particularly troubling: HIV patients who drop below 95 percent adherence find the rate of sustained viral suppression drops from 80 to 50 percent; a Veteran Affairs study showed a 2.4 fold increase in hospital admissions for non-adherent patients suffering from schizophrenia. These are just a couple of examples of why CMSA developed the Council for Case Management Accountability (CCMA) and introduced the CMAG-1 guidelines.

Case Management Adherence Guidelines (CMAG-1)

As the leading organization for setting standards, CMSA recently introduced CMAG-1 to give case management healthcare professionals a base structure to leverage when managing their patients' medication adherence. The guidelines, developed through the

hard work and dedication of CMSA's Council for Cost Management Accountability, produce better patient outcomes and reduce financial costs throughout the system.

CMAG-1 provides relevant statistics, and focuses on two vital factors in the role of patient adherence – motivation and knowledge. It provides a variety of tools, tests and techniques to assess these factors and construct informational algorithms for each individual patient. This allows healthcare workers to develop proper interviewing and testing strategies to increase motivation and best educate patients depending on their unique needs. And statistics show that educated, motivated patients are far more likely to follow their prescribed medication treatment. Though they were developed to specifically address medication adherence, the concepts and tools of CMAG-1 are also useful in treating other therapeutic needs of patients, such as psychological counseling, exercise and weight reduction, and cessation of smoking.

The guidelines address the gamut of factors that differentiate the needs of one patient from another: medical condition, current medications, age, ethnicity, living situation and a host of others. They purposely require a high degree of patient involvement and encourage an open dialogue and significant interaction between patients, case management professionals and all care givers. Likewise, CMAG-1 gives case managers and healthcare providers the necessary means to evaluate how a patient's support group may correspond to that patient's medication adherence rate. It also addresses the most challenging cases – patients with chronic illnesses. These patients are often less capable of fending for themselves due to advanced age, substance abuse problems, homelessness, or poor behavior habits. Medication adherence is especially critical in cases of chronic illness, as the greatest health and cost benefits lie in the balance.

Member Services

CMSA offers a wide range of services and programs both nationally and at the chapter level to help case management professionals with all aspects of their job, from learning

new techniques and acquiring new disciplines to enhancing career opportunities. These include:

Annual Conference & Expo: CMSA's Annual Conference & Expo – the industry's most comprehensive annual event– provides attendees with a vast selection of educational seminars, keynote addresses and networking opportunities, plus the chance to meet with exhibiting companies at the forefront of the industry. More than 2,000 healthcare professionals from around the globe typically attend to learn about the latest issues, trends and innovations in case management practices, products and services.

Education: One of the chief benefits of CMSA membership is its educational programs. CMSA offers courses online and off, all focused on advancing the knowledge, skill levels and career advancement of case management professionals. CMSA's WebED provides a variety of online courses related to each and every aspect of case management.

Networking/Research Opportunities: CMSA continues to expand its networking and research benefits beyond the Annual Conference and individual chapter events. CMSA offers networking services online through its Online Membership Directory and Communities of Practice (CoP), where members anywhere can share knowledge and ideas and collaborate on the latest issues related to the case management profession. CMSA also offers an exhaustive database of scholarly articles and information that are easily retrievable online.

CareerCenter: The CareerCenter offers online career advancement services to all members of the society. By clicking on the careers link on the society's home page (www.cmsa.org), members can quickly and easily view nationwide job listings in the field, post their resume, and track and manage their own personal, customized job searches.

Leadership Opportunities: CMSA encourages active participation in the society by offering leadership positions on national or local chapter levels. The leadership ladder

encourages chapter leaders to progress to national positions through leadership training provided by local chapters.

Public/Legislative Advocacy: CMSA promotes the benefits of case management and advocates the goals of the profession through active programs to educate the media, government officials and the general public. This is done through national coordination at the board level as well as on a grassroots, chapter level. CMSA continually seeks to focus the important issues facing our healthcare system and encourage the adoption of the latest standards, such as CMAG-1.

Further information is available at www.cmsa.org.

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