



The Standards of Professional Case Management Practice

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All professions have unique skills, knowledge, and ethical standards that guide the professional in what knowledge and responsibilities are required and how to execute what has been learned.

Three features characterize a profession and professional values:

1. Specialized training
2. Recognition of the need for standards of practice
3. Commitment to provide a service that goes beyond the personal interests of the professional

These values are critical to the ethical identity of the professional. The ever-volatile healthcare environment requires healthcare professionals to be guided by values and principles. Standards of practice guide professionals in daily work with those they serve.

Case managers assess needs, identify barriers, support and provide information, and coordinate needed care and services while communicating the client's progress to physicians and other members of the treatment team.

To ensure desired outcomes are achieved, a standardized approach to case management is recommended. Implementing Standards of practice results in support of a positive work environment, encouragement, and creativity to meet the complex needs of the populations served (Moise & Mulhapp, 2016) (Moise & Mulhapp, 2016). Case managers set priorities and must make timely decisions with regards to the implementation of needed care and services.

To function at the highest level of professional practice, standardized case management training is necessary. Determinants to positive performance and outcomes are the result of inconsistent processes, inconsistent or ineffective training, and lack of clarity in performance expectations, roles and function.

Consistent messaging and standardized training using a specific set of standards are needed to meet requirements outlined by Medicare, Medicaid, commercial, other federal payers. Case management impacts clinical quality outcomes and use of healthcare resources. Case managers should provide individual, holistic, and high-quality care, but unless the appropriate investment in training and standardization occur, the goal of improved health outcomes will be inconsistent (Moise & Mulhapp, 2016).

The Case Management Society of America established Standards of Practice in 1995 and have revised the Standards as the healthcare industry has evolved. The most recent revision occurred in 2016. The increasing focus on case management as a result of the Accountable Care Act, National Commission for Quality Assurance (NCQA), the National Quality Forum (NQF), Chronic Care Improvement Plans (CCPI) and Model of Care development established by CMS, and Utilization Review Accreditation Commission (URAC) has resulted in an outline of very specific requirements for case management practice for organizations to meet contractual and accreditation requirements. *CMSA's Standards of Practice for Case Management* are the industry standard providing guidance and a common understanding of the role, process and expectations of the case manager. While the *Standards of Practice for Case Management* have been available since 1995, CMSA now offers an online course that provides organizations and individuals the opportunity to learn, in-depth, the standards and how to apply them to practice. The *Standards of Professional Case Management Practice Program* is available in CMSA's online learning platform.

Supporting Accreditation and Contractual Requirements

- CMSA's Standards of Practice for Case Management support the following NCQA Case Management Elements:
 - CM 2: Identification and Assessment
 - CM 3: Care planning
 - CM 4: Care Monitoring
 - CM 7: Staffing and Training
 - CM 9: Privacy, Security, and Confidentiality
- The Standards support CMS' Chronic Care Improvement Plan components and Model of Care Development
- The National Quality Forum (NQF) supports a Foundation for practice with demonstrated impact on patient outcomes through care coordination. *CMSA's Standards of Practice for Case Management* provide guidance in all aspects of care coordination. NQF defines care coordination as "a function that helps ensure that the patient's needs and preferences for health services and information, sharing across people, functions, and sites are met over time (Forum, 2014)." The strategy outlined by NQF serves to guide efforts at all levels to improve the quality of healthcare in the United States.

The *Standards of Practice for Case Management* align with the regulatory compliance mandates impacting the entire healthcare continuum. The interpretation and understanding of these standards is paramount to obtaining successful outcomes in the care delivery of patients. Case managers new to the profession benefit from learning the case management *Standards* through the interactive *Standards of Professional Case Management Practice Program*, making the Program an excellent orientation activity for on-boarding new staff. Experienced case managers benefit from the Program through a review of the *CMSA Standards of Practice* to ensure a standardized and effective approach. Practical application of the Standards is demonstrated through video vignettes making the Standards 'real' for daily practice.

To learn more about the CMSA Standards of Practice for Case Management, visit www.cmsa.org/sop.

To learn more about the CMSA Standards of Professional Case Management Program, visit <http://www.cmsa.org/sopcmcourse/>.

References:

Forum, N. Q. (2014). *NQF Endorsed Measures for Care Coordination Phase 3 2014*. Washington: United States Department of Health and Human Services.

Moise, I.K., & Mulhapp, P.F. (2016). Provider Perspectives on Case Management of a Health Start Program. A Qualitative Study. PLoS One, 71-81.