



## Understanding the Differences in CMSA and CCMC

Introduction: Within the field of case management, there are two very important, yet distinct and separate, organizations: the Case Management Society of America (CMSA) and the Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC). Because of their overlapping areas of interest, yet complementary missions, we believe it is desirable and informative to provide an explanation of the roles and relationships of each organization.

[Case Management Society of America \(CMSA\)](#)

[The Commission for Case Manager Certification \(CCMC\)](#)

### CMSA

From its very beginning, case management has fundamentally been about the patients we serve. It's about helping patients and families understand what's wrong, what they need to do about it and why that's important. Sounds simple, doesn't it? At its core, the root of case management remains unchanged. What's complex is the healthcare system in which case managers operate...a system in which payers and providers often call the shots...a system in which case managers must fight for recognition of their contributions...and one in which patients sometimes fall through the cracks.

From humble beginnings and because of the passion and dedication of case managers around the country, CMSA continues to make significant advances, not only in the way employers and providers view case managers, but also in how case managers view themselves. Our goal as the leading non-profit professional association for case managers has always been to advance the industry, as well as the professional. Since its inception in 1990, CMSA has been dedicated to the support and development of case management professionals through educational and networking opportunities and industry-advancing initiatives.

CMSA is frequently confused with the Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC), the certifying body offering the Certified Case Management (CCM) credential. Rather, CMSA is the professional association for case managers. As such, we recognize the importance and value of industry-recognized credentials. However, CMSA is not the certifying body for any case management credential. Nevertheless, CMSA does seek to work collaboratively with the primary case management credentialing bodies to ensure a qualified and highly trained corps of case management professionals.

CMSA first developed the internationally accepted *Standards of Practice for Case Management* in 1995 (revised in 2002). Also in 1995, the National Board approved a peer-reviewed *Ethics Statement on Case Management Practice*. CMSA established the first *National Case Management Week* in 1999 and has since worked collaboratively with other organizations to unify that celebration during the second full week in October.

In 2005, CMSA is celebrating 15 years of service to the case management industry culminating at our Annual Conference and Expo in June. The annual conference, having matured over the last decade and a half, is now the leading multi-disciplinary case management conference in the nation, drawing attendees and exhibitors from every state in the country and international attendees from around the world.

CMSA's online presence serves as the face of the industry to a world seeking to solve the ever-present crises in healthcare. Since 1998, [www.cmsa.org](http://www.cmsa.org) has grown to offer WebED online CEs, a CareerCenter for job seekers and employers, an online Bookstore, Communities of Practice, an Online Membership Directory, Case Management Adherence Guidelines (CMAG) and CMAGTracker database, White Papers and Position Statements, Case Management Resource Paths, *The Standards of Practice for Case Management*, Caseload and Salary surveys, and much more.

Most recently, CMSA established formal Communities of Practice (CoPs) to serve as the premier marketplace for the exchange of information and creative thinking. Furthermore, the CoPs serve as the repository for building the formal body of knowledge for case management in a variety of practice settings.

As a member-based association, CMSA consistently strives to provide only the highest-quality member programs and services in response to the expressed needs of our members. To that end, the CMSA Board of Directors met in October 2004 to revitalize our vision for the future of this great industry. Building on CMSA's solid framework, what follows is a roadmap for the present and into the future. These plans plot the future of case management and are set to lead industry transformation in the face of rapid changes in healthcare, economics, technology, and the world at large.

### **CMSA's Vision**

We envision case managers as pioneers of healthcare change... key initiators of and participants in the healthcare team who open up new areas of thought, research and development, leading the way towards the day when every American will know what a case manager does and how to access case management services.

### **CMSA's Mission**

CMSA's mission is to positively impact and improve patient wellbeing and patient healthcare outcomes by upholding the following:

- Informing consumers about the services case managers provide
- Educating physicians and other providers about improved patient outcomes through the services case managers provide
- Educating payors and regulators about improved patient outcomes that case management services can provide

Case managers believe patients need an advocate – someone who helps each client understand what's wrong with them, what they need to do about it, and why that treatment is important. In this way, case managers serve as catalysts. By participating in the equation, case managers enable their clients to achieve goals more effectively and efficiently.

## Pathways to Successful Case Management – Creating a New Paradigm

Being a change agent means having the will and determination to break old models and patterns of thinking and behaviour. Those changes are reflected in the development of *CMSA's Pathways to Successful Case Management* – part of the CMSA Strategic Plan. You will find that the Pathways incorporate several new assumptions about CMSA, its members, and the work we do.

First, the Pathways will focus on case manager education, ensuring an appropriate, personalized career path for everyone, regardless of experience level or career goals. These make way for creating professional improvement pathways and resources to support case manager development and evolution towards positions of strategic importance and value to the healthcare team.

Second, the plan also affirms that CMSA must elevate the awareness of the strategic importance of case management by leading that evolution towards a value-driven model based on ROI and patient outcomes.

In the last year alone, CMSA's Council for Case Management Accountability (CCMA) produced the first-ever Case Management Adherence Guidelines and CMAGTracker online tool. This revolutionary data-tracking tool, when used in concert with the guidelines, will soon provide crucial outcomes data for individual CMs and employers as well as association-wide.

Third, finally in support of strategies one and two, CMSA will seek to passionately claim our place in the healthcare team through purposeful communication strategies with every stakeholder group, especially the consumer.

These are three paths to success. It is important to understand that case managers look to CMSA for increased professional value and business skills, while employers seek improved business outcomes. *CMSA's Pathways to Successful Case Management* focuses on three clearly defined strategies, each with specific outcomes designed to enhance everyone's success. For more information about CMSA, visit [www.cmsa.org](http://www.cmsa.org) or contact CMSA Member Services at (501)225-2229, ext 10.

## **CCMC**

The Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC) is the first and largest nationally accredited organization that certifies case managers. The CCMC is an independent credentialing agency that is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) since 1999. It has no organizational ties to CMSA.

Our Certified Case Manager (CCM) designation is widely recognized as the gold standard in the field of case management, demonstrating that the certificant has the required educational background, professional experience, knowledge and skills needed to perform the roles and functions of a case manager. Since its first certification exam was given in May 1993, the CCMC has certified more than 30,000 case managers from a variety of professional disciplines including nursing, social services, vocational rehabilitation counsellors, managed care, and others.

The Commission traces its roots to a Consensus Meeting convened in Dallas in February 1991 by the Individual Case Management Association (ICMA). The 29 case management organizations attending that meeting agreed to form a National Case Management Task Force to explore the establishment of a voluntary case management certification. In 1992, a proposal to develop the new credential was accepted from the former Certification of Insurance Rehabilitation Specialists Commission (CIRSC).

The CIRSC then authorized the formation of an Interim Commission to implement the certification process, develop and field test a valid certification examination, and refine the eligibility criteria for the CCM credential. Then, on July 1, 1995, the Interim Commission was renamed the Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC).

*The mission of the CCMC is to “promote professional case management certification through credentialing to advance the quality of case management services provided to clients<sup>1</sup> and their families, as permitted by practice or practice setting.”*

The CCMC takes pride in its certification exam, which is based upon ongoing, rigorous and scientifically conducted research and is reflective of current demands and practices of the case management field. This research includes a Case Manager Role and Function Study, which is conducted every five years, as well as continual work to monitor and assess changes in the field. The integrity of our research-based examination has also allowed the CCMC to achieve prestigious national accreditation from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). CCMC’s accreditation has been recently renewed through November 2009. In addition, URAC also has determined that the CCM credential is a recognized case management certification.

CCMC’s research has advanced the practice of case management by:

- Establishing the professional identity of case managers;
- Describing the uniqueness of the practice;
- Defining case management core competencies and the overall role of case managers;
- Defining the essential activities of case managers and the knowledge areas necessary for competent practice;
- Creating a leadership role through peer review, resulting in certification and certification renewal;
- Identifying the shared competency areas of case management as well as comparing case management to other related disciplines;
- Developing and adopting a Scope of Practice document, as well as a Code of Professional Conduct for case managers;
- Supporting the Standards of Practice developed by the CMSA.

The CCMC defines the field of case management as “a collaborative process that assesses, plans, implements, coordinates, monitors, and evaluates the options and services required to meet an individual’s health needs, using communication and available resources to promote quality, cost-effective outcomes.”

The CCMC benefits the field of case management by requiring that all Certified Case Managers commit to continuing education, which is vitally important in the dynamic field of case

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, “client” refers to the recipient of case management services, and can include (but is not necessary limited to) consumer, client, or patient.

management. Changes in the field include the practice of case management in a wider variety of venues, from acute care hospitals to private practice and insurance settings.

Certified Case Managers are also required to adhere to a Code of Professional Conduct, which was developed in 1996. The CCMC adopted a revised Code in June 2004, which became effective on January 1, 2005. One of the primary changes in the revised Code, compared with the previous document, is that the role of the case manager as an advocate is defined much more clearly. The CCMC believes this emphasis will help case managers when dealing with ethical situations involving multiple and conflicting parties, including patients/families, healthcare providers and agencies, and insurance companies or other third party payers.

Principles of the Code of Professional Conduct include:

1. Certificants will place the public interest above their own at all times.
2. Certificants will respect the rights and inherent dignity of all of their clients.
3. Certificants will always maintain objectivity in their relationships with clients.
4. Certificants will act with integrity in dealing with other professionals to facilitate their clients' achieving maximum benefits.
5. Certificants will keep their competency at a level that ensures each of their clients will receive the benefit of services that are appropriate and consistent for the client's conditions and circumstances.
6. Certificants will honor the integrity and respect the limitations placed on the use of the CCM designation.
7. Certificants will obey all laws and regulations.
8. Certificants will help maintain the integrity of the Code.

The CCMC recognizes that case management serves as a means for achieving client wellness and autonomy through advocacy, communication, education, identification of service resources, and service facilitation. Case managers help identify appropriate providers and facilities throughout the continuum of services. At the same time, they ensure that available resources are being used in a timely and cost-effective manner and in order to obtain optimum value for both the client and the reimbursement source. The CCMC believes that case management services are best offered in a climate that allows direct communication between the case manager, the client, and appropriate service personnel, in order to optimize the outcome for all concerned.

The CCMC also believes that, through certification, case managers demonstrate that they possess the education, skills, knowledge, and experience required to render appropriate services based on sound principles of practice.

## **CLOSING STATEMENT**

The CMSA and the CCMC are pleased to publish this joint document and hope you find the information helpful in your communication and collaboration with individuals and other organizations.

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