

The Clinical Manager:

A PRIMER FOR HOME HEALTH
AND HOSPICE



Most Clinical Managers will have a background either in nursing or physical therapy, which provides clinical experience, but may be lacking in the financial aspect of an organization. Clinical managers often struggle with financial and operational oversight if they do not receive much business training. Promoting a field clinician to a management position may require training on essential business metrics.

2. Quality and Team-Based Care

Among the many responsibilities of the Clinical Manager, ensuring quality care is delivered to all patients is critical.

“The Clinical Manager should definitely be involved in the agency’s quality initiatives,” Entin says. “This position needs to play a key role in quality improvement functions, starting with oversight of care planning.”

“This person has to be very involved with the staff in terms of time management and documentation skills,” Entin says. This includes case conferencing, joint visits and regular documentation review.

Care coordination is another key responsibility of the Clinical Manager, which requires close management and communication.

The Clinical Manager takes a 10,000-foot view of the organization while being accessible on the ground.

“A lot of great things happen when you have people talking to each other about the cases,” Maroney says. “Interdisciplinary care coordination is critical and having discussions with nursing, therapy and other staff together makes a big difference.”

Some organizations have a separate rehabilitation manager who can serve as a subject-matter expert for the therapy program, while the Clinical Manager supervises the therapy staff as part of the inter-disciplinary team.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Quality care must lead to bottom-line results. For home health, value-based purchasing plans are providing financial rewards for quality outcomes. For both home health and hospice providers, good outcomes and patient experiences translate into more referrals from trusted referral sources.

3. Compliance and Regulatory

In addition to leadership and team-based care, the Clinical Manager serves one more essential function: compliance. He or she must ensure regulatory, billing and quality compliance.

“This is where the rubber meets the road,” says Laura Wilson, a Simione Senior Manager. “Especially with respect to quality and compliance. Conducting home visits and ride-along visits is a good opportunity to evaluate whether the clinicians in the field are providing care which follows both company and regulatory guidelines.”

Operations Management and the Clinical Manager

Clinical Managers are responsible for key functions such as productivity and staffing. In their respective teams, among other factors they must oversee:

Home health — Productivity, staffing and caseload management

Hospice — Reimbursement per day, pharmacy cost, utilization for durable medical equipment

All — Rehospitalization rates, star ratings, patient satisfaction, survey readiness

Considerations for regulatory compliance include:

- **Plans of care meet patient needs in a quality-assured manner and still comply with regulatory requirements**
- **Quality benchmarks are achieved**
- **Documentation supports all billing requirements**
- **All state licensing requirements are met**

“This is the role that understands what is really happening in the field,” Wilson says.

From a billing compliance perspective, the Clinical Manager must review documents and plans of care with staff, and ensure that the care is skilled and medically necessary.

“This is where you match what you are going to spend versus what’s reimbursed,” Wilson says. “They have to manage the KPIs to make that happen. That is where the building blocks come together.”

As the regulatory environment changes with the introduction of the Patient-Driven Groupings Model (PDGM), the role of the Clinical Manager will become even more important, particularly with respect to utilization, low-utilization payment adjustments (LUPAs), prevention, and care management and planning.

“As we are working with organizations across the country, this is one of the key areas to invest in with PDGM,” Wilson says. “Everything ends up on their desk. The Clinical Manager is going to be the air traffic controller and needs a thorough understanding of the regulation and reimbursement, and will need to use everything available to them in the field.”

Training and Retaining Clinical Managers for the Future

With the onset of PDGM and the ever-changing regulatory environment for home health and hospice, identifying and training Clinical Managers is going to be an essential and ongoing process for all organizations.

Contact

Simione Healthcare Consultants provides comprehensive training and support in clinical management for home health and hospice, as well as assessment of clinical operations to support performance improvement in quality, staffing and leadership initiatives.

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