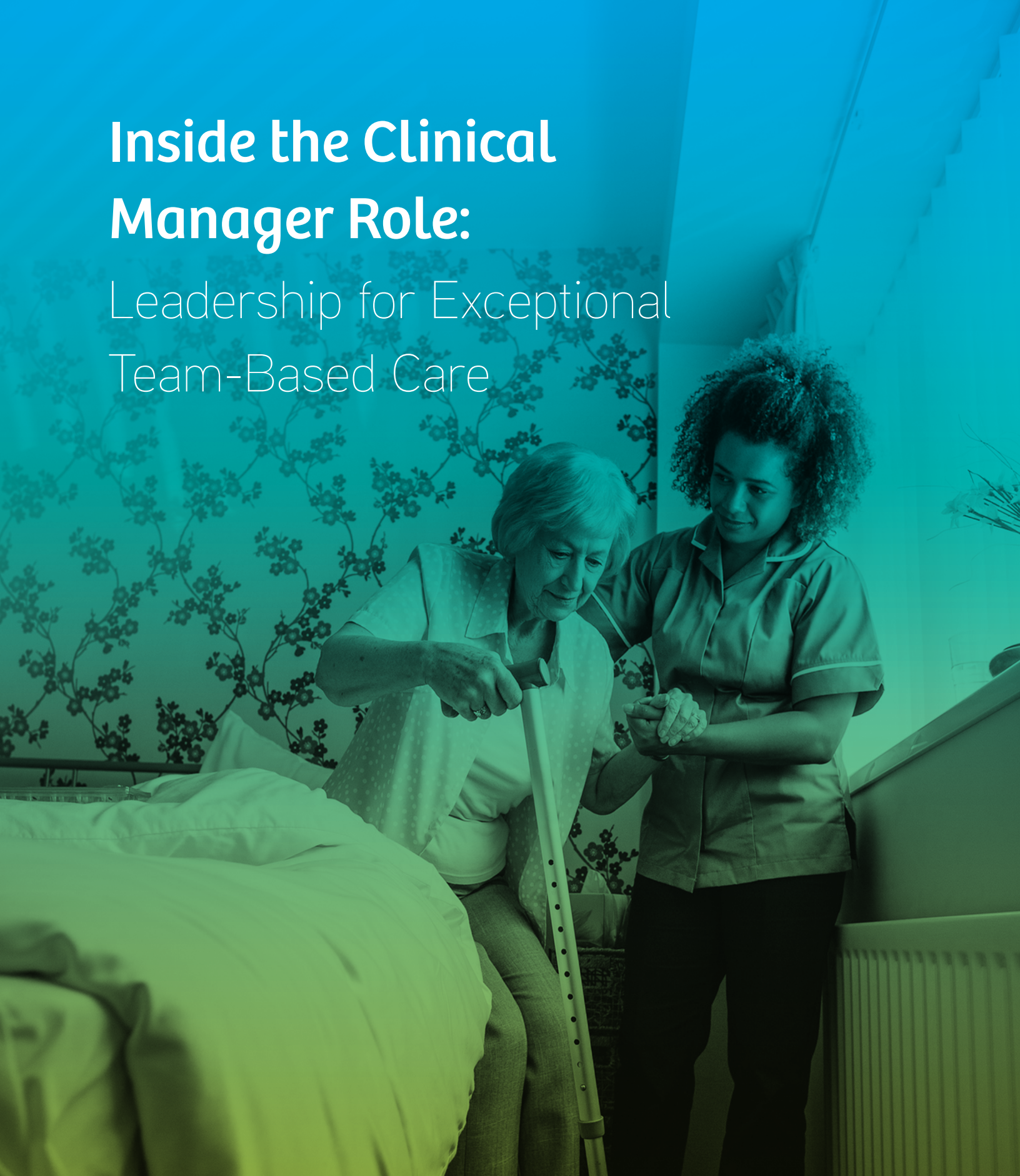


Inside the Clinical Manager Role:

Leadership for Exceptional
Team-Based Care



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The Clinical Manager function is critical in today's home health care and hospice organizations. This person plays a key role within his or her agency to support not only patient care, but also essential business operations. Typically, the job is involved with both the financial and personnel aspects of an agency.

Today, more than ever, having the right fit for this position is essential. The Clinical Manager is tasked with day-to-day responsibilities, driving the organization forward, and above all, setting the tone and leadership for all other job functions in a successful organization.

In this white paper, you will learn:

- What characteristics and experience make for an ideal Clinical Manager
- Definition and responsibilities of the Clinical Manager
- How organizations can recruit and train their Clinical Managers for retention and success



What makes a Clinical Manager superhero?

Clinical Manager “superheroes” are the lynchpins of every home health and hospice agency. They support clinical functions, business decisions, and leadership development.

“These are the individuals who not only have to train the staff, but also to coach and manage them through patient care management,” says Julia Maroney, RN, MHSA, Director, Clinical Operations for Hamden, Connecticut-based Simone Healthcare Consultants.



Some common characteristics of a Clinical Manager superhero are:

- Excellent management and leadership abilities
- Excellent interpersonal, organizational and communication skills
- Ability to create a positive work environment
- Ability to identify and solve problems
- Adept at setting priorities and multitasking
- Understands the role of the field clinician and can teach best-practice case management, such as documenting in the home and self-scheduling

This role has become even more important through the need for meaningful data and accountability in home health care and hospice, as set by recent regulations and national benchmarks.

“The whole industry is evolving with respect to clinical outcomes and being accountable for them,” Maroney says. “The Clinical Manager role has a level of intensity that we haven’t seen in years past—that is in looking at clinical data and helping staff to wade through what’s accessible and relevant to drive good outcomes.”

“The whole industry is evolving with respect to clinical outcomes and being accountable for them.”

*Julia Maroney, RN, MHSA, Director,
Clinical Operations
Simione Healthcare Consultants*

But a Clinical Manager is only as good as the support team, and establishing an organizational infrastructure to assist the Clinical Manager is essential to his or her success.

Creating a winning clinical management team

One provider opted to restructure its entire staffing and reporting functions to better align with the evolving role of clinical management and enhance team performance. With an aim toward a best-practice care delivery model and consolidating two home care agencies in early 2017, Aultman Healthcare in Your Home, based in Canton, Ohio, knew it would have to redefine some job functions and reporting activities. The company is part of the larger Aultman Healthcare system, and previously had a single Clinical Director who oversaw the home care program. Executive leadership determined that roles overseeing both clinical operations and business functions were often overwhelmed, and pushed to provide more support for those specific job functions as part of the plan.

The company engaged Simione Healthcare Consultants to help identify and work through the changes, including the merger with another home health agency. Specifically, Aultman realigned functional roles to be more focused on individual responsibilities, freeing up the Clinical Director to drive overall clinical performance, and adding Clinical Managers to focus on team management for patient care.

By assigning separate roles to be responsible for Intake, QAPI, CoP changes, Joint Commission reporting and other ongoing tasks, the clinical management team could better focus on its core functions, says Angela Williams, VP Post-Acute Care, Aultman Healthcare in Your Home.

“This allows the Director of the agency’s clinical services to focus her attention on mentoring and developing the Clinical Managers in establishing best in class clinicians,” she says.

Today, the Clinical Director’s role is supported by three Clinical Managers who are nurses, as well as a Rehab Manager who is responsible for overseeing the rehab program. In the reporting hierarchy, each discipline reports to the Clinical Managers. The Clinical Manager’s key responsibilities are to plan, coordinate, manage and evaluate the activities of a multidisciplinary team to ensure the delivery of high-quality home care services to the patients of his or her team.



The Clinical Director now has more flexibility to focus on critical functions for the overall service line, such as:

- Planning, directing and evaluating operations and delivery of overall clinical services
- Leadership and guidance to assist clinical managers in meeting agency objectives, quality and compliance requirements

Simione's focused review and extensive experience helped Aultman evaluate and improve its approach to team structure and composition, regulations and compliance, management, leadership, work flow and information systems, and hiring and retention.

"We especially benefitted from Simione's guidance on roles and responsibilities, clinical management, analytics for decision-making, and the use of technology," Williams says. "It is an ongoing investment of time and support and it's something we work on every day. We involve our team closely to develop shared solutions. The key is providing the rationale on 'why.' We can all understand and contribute if we know the 'why.'"

Clinical management from the ground up

Simione's comprehensive Clinical Management training and leadership development curriculum prepares organizations undertaking consolidation and major growth initiatives to improve performance. **Key areas of focus include:**

- Home health and hospice rules and regulations
- The survey process
- Management and leadership
- Team-based care
- Quality management
- The role of home-based services
- Business operations
- Compliance
- Physician engagement

Simione Principal Marian Entin, RN, BSN, says, “Leadership in clinical management is critical to successful organizational transformation. We focus on total team engagement to demonstrate the value of highly experienced Clinical Managers in guiding the case management model, and the positive impact on clinical outcomes and the patient experience. Without the Clinical Manager’s buy-in and complete operational understanding of her role and the other team members’ roles, the model is not sustainable. In our experience, the most successful Clinical Manager has been a successful Case Manager, which allows her to speak from experience and with credibility when managing productivity, requiring POC documentation in the home, case load management, and time management.”

“Leadership in clinical management is critical to successful organizational transformation.”

Marian Entin, RN, BSN

Principal

Simione Healthcare Consultants

Recruiting and retaining for success in the Clinical Manager role

Recruiting and retaining all staff across job functions in home health and hospice is a challenge today, but there are some particular dynamics when it comes to recruiting for the Clinical Manager role.

“It’s the job that gets the most thrown on its plate,” says Eric Scharber, Principal with Exact Recruiting, a Simione Talent Solution. “It still has all the historical responsibilities it has always had—overseeing field staff, handling referrals, family, physicians, developing plans of care, reviewing paperwork, and OASIS.”

Scharber identifies two main strategies in hiring a Clinical Manager:

1. Develop from within. Hire field nurses with the intention of developing them and setting them up to become Clinical Managers. Do this on an ongoing basis, Scharber says. “If you strictly focus on recruiting when someone leaves, there will not be enough candidates to go around.”

2. Cast a wide recruiting net. This can be done in several ways. Get the word out through as many avenues as possible that your organization is hiring. This could be through an industry or national job board, like CareerBuilder. Additionally, use social media. “If you don’t have a presence, you’re missing out,” Scharber says. “Plus, it’s free.”

When it comes to retaining Clinical Managers, again this process needs to be proactive, rather than reactive. Focus on the “retention department,” rather than the recruiting department, with an eye toward three aspects of the job:

- **Compensation.** Know what the market is bearing for the position. If your organization is offering 105% of the market average, that should be a good indicator of retention.
- **Chemistry/culture.** If employees aren’t aligned with the mission, vision, and values of the organization, they are unlikely to have a good relationship with managers.
- **Professional growth and advancement opportunity.** Among the top five reasons employees leave their jobs is to grow professionally. “The top staff are not looking for a dead-end job,” Scharber says. “Have ways for people do to more, whether that’s going to conferences, management training, and developing field nurses. Develop your own bench to help people move up.”

The clinical manager job posting

When posting an open Clinical Manager role, less is more. Too many words and too much description can turn a candidate off. Bring a sales mentality to recruiting and engage the prospective employee with a brief, exciting, catchy pitch.



Conclusion

The Clinical Manager role is changing. It not only encompasses clinical functions, but also constitutes a leadership role that can help drive home health care and hospice organizations forward.

It is essential for providers to be proactive and strategic when it comes to hiring for this role, and to provide support and structure that will lead to its success.



Contact

Contact Simone Healthcare Consultants to learn more about our solutions for home health, hospice and palliative care.

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