

# The Care Management Team, LLC

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*Nurses and Social Workers: When and Where You Need Us  
Protecting Your Quality of Care and Quality of Life*

## **Valuable Partnership: When Can Geriatric Care Manager Help You?**

As a professional guardian, you are called on to make many day-to-day decisions regarding your wards and their care, as well as more complex, life-altering choices. This is not an easy role, and it comes with its own special rewards and challenges. Over time, you build a cadre of professionals you can turn to for help and support: physicians, facilities, home care companies, equipment companies, attorneys, financial professionals, and more. As situations become increasingly complex, a professional care manager might be a useful resource to consider also. More cases face closer scrutiny from the courts, families, and the press when things do not go smoothly, and showing the effort to get professional input on various issues demonstrates good faith toward protecting your ward.

As defined by the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers, “a geriatric care manager is a health and human services professional, such as a gerontologist, nurse, social worker, or psychologist with a specialized focus on issues related to aging and elder care. Geriatric care managers work privately with older adults and their families to create a plan of care that meets the needs of the older adult.” The association’s website ([www.caremanager.org](http://www.caremanager.org)) provides information on membership and important questions to ask when hiring a care manager. Members are required to have one of three professional certifications and most members have advanced degrees and years of experience in geriatrics and social services.

When might a professional care manager help you? Some examples include:

- Developing care plans to ensure proper service (and monitoring)
- Helping with difficult placements
- Creating cost projections for care
- Consulting for specific expertise (i.e. Medicaid/Medicare, community resources, dementia and mental health issues)

In a fiduciary role it is imperative to ensure the proper use of client funds, and by not consulting an expert, you may be missing opportunities for the client to receive funding or participate in benefit programs. Care managers have different levels of expertise in various areas, and it is wise to develop a working knowledge of local care managers and their backgrounds. Some care managers focus solely on geriatric clients and most have a great deal of expertise in dementia and medical

issues typical in aging clients, while others may have a background in mental health or specific diseases. Find out who can help when you encounter particular issues, and do the usual due diligence.

There may be times when your ward has been working with a care manager prior to the guardianship who can provide useful continuity for the client and family. The care manager can help you understand the client's history and family dynamics and enable you to more effectively meet the client's needs. It helps to have a good working relationship so that you can both work to the continued benefit of the client.

As cases become more complex, as do the systems we all work within, it is only possible to truly meet the needs of our clients/wards through a team approach. Sharing our expertise and working to the common good of our clients benefits the community of our vulnerable citizens. You have a weighty job as a guardian and you can take advantage of our extensive community resources to support you in this valuable role.