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| Job Responsibilities of Nursing Case Manager |
| Primary Care Model |
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The consistent provisions of quality health care delivery and tremendous financial costs

generated from such have been concerns for many. In the past, even though payers continued

to seek methods for reducing costs while advancing quality and clearness of services rendered,

clients were left to guide the system without resources, support, and education which are all

the vital key points. Therefore, case management has emerged as an important intervention

that fosters the watchful guiding of health care dollars while maintaining a primary and

constant focus on quality of care, client’s self-determination, and self-care management. In

today’s healthcare system, case managers are recognized as experts and vital participants of

the care coordination team that empower patients to understand and access quality health

care. As indicated in the study by Van Landeghem & Brach, Primary Care Case Management

(PCCM) have shown to lower utilization of well-child and primary care visits while improving

disease management effectively thus decreasing the costs of healthcare.

Primary Care Case Management model is a managed fee-for-service arrangement, utilizing

a network of primary care physicians and other healthcare providers for Medicaid patients.

Enrollees of this healthcare delivery model include pregnant women, children, low-income

families, low-income individuals, and adult patients with disabilities.

A nurse case manager working in a primary care setting coordinates care needs for patients

across healthcare delivery system continuously. He/she ensures that clients receive the most

efficient and effective care according to the individual needs in the most sufficient way,

enabling for improved patient outcome while containing costs. According to the 2010 guide of

standards of practice, case management is “a collaborative process of assessment, planning,

facilitation, care coordination, evaluation, and advocacy for options and services to meet an

individual’s and family’s comprehensive health needs through communication and available

resources to promote quality cost effective outcomes”. Working in a primary care setting, nurse

case manager carries several titles at the same time while addressing patients’ needs and

collaborating with healthcare team. As a nurse case manager, one is able to see the picture of

patients’ needs in a holistic way, and therefore, is able to assure that correct and sufficient

resources and services are provided/utilized in a timely matter according to the unique needs

of each client individually.

Successful patients’ outcomes cannot be established without specialized skills and

knowledge of a nurse case manager in collaboration with other health care professionals such

as doctors, OT, PT, social workers, and other providers as well as patients themselves. These

skills include constructive relationships, effective communication, and negotiation, knowledge

of risk arrangements, performing ongoing evaluations and critical analysis, and the ability to

organize and plan accordingly to the patients’ specific needs.

It is essential that a case manager possess the knowledge of funding sources, insurances

available/qualifying, health care services, healthcare delivery and financing systems, human

dynamics, as well as clinical standards and outcomes. To carry out such effectively, nurse case

manager encompasses numerous roles and responsibilities while functioning in a primary care

setting and which should be prioritized based on what is required or is essential for specific

client’s needs according to the practice established.

Initially, nurse case manager conducts a comprehensive assessment of the client’s medical

health and psychosocial needs. Nurse case manager also assess patient’s health literacy status

and deficits. He/she will then, based upon assessment conducted, develop a case management

plan collaboratively with considerations of client and family or caregiver.

Planning/ coordination of care is another job responsibility of a nurse case manager. To

maximize health care responses, quality, and cost-effective outcome, planning with the client,

family, care providers, as well as payer and community takes place. The social problems of

many clients can be overwhelming, therefore, coordinating care with social worker, knowledge

of community resources and access to such plays a vital role in patient’s well-being and safe

discharge and does require expert case manager and communication skills.

Case manager is also responsible for facilitating communication between members of

healthcare team, insurance agents, and other beneficial resourceful foundations meanwhile

involving the client and family in the decision making process in order to minimize

misunderstanding, gaps, and wastes in services.

Through comprehensive and clear communication with patient and family, case manager

acts as an educator which is another important role of such. Nurse case manager serves as an

educator to the client and family as well as to the health care team about treatment options,

community resources available, insurance benefits, psychosocial concerns, and case

management in order to achieve timely and informed decisions.

Achieving informed patient decisions can be established with the concept of advocacy. It is

indeed one of the most important roles of a case manager and is, per say, one of the most

challenging tasks as it pertains to every action and every decision made regardless patient care.

As a patient advocate, case manager is obligated to maintain and protect client’s privacy and

confidentiality. By following such, the case manager is protecting the patient’s dignity and is

practicing within the standards and scope of practice while assisting patients in the times of

mental, medical, or emotional weakness. It is essential especially during the vulnerable and out

of patient’s and families’ control times, while he or she may be unable to speak for or represent

himself/herself or on the behalf of. One way to serve as the patient’s advocate for a case

manager is to assist the patient to achieve autonomy and self-determination as well as to assist

the client to become empowered, self-controlled, and self-determined. This can be achieved by

allowing patient and family to express any concerns, views, desires, and choices and to make

informed decisions thereafter. These decisions are finalized and determined based on patient’s

and family’s personal wishes, beliefs, and values which should be acknowledged by the case

manager in a sensitive, non-discriminatory, respectable, and non-judgmental way. This is why

culture competency and sensitivity plays an excruciating role in patient care and must be

addressed meticulously.

The rapidly evolving demographics and economics of a promptly growing multicultural

world and the numerous disparities in the healthcare of patients from diverse ethnic and

cultural backgrounds has challenged health care providers to consider cultural competence as

one of the priorities.

Cultural competence is the essential ingredient for successful patient care and transition of

healthcare through continuum. Serving such a broad variety of population, sufficient patient

care cannot be achieved without it. Cultural competence is crucial to successful client-centered

care. As article by Bearskin, R. L. B., states:”…nurses are required to incorporate culture into all

domains of their nursing practice…cultural competency...” So what do we refer to when we

address cultural competence? It is simply the process by which individuals and systems respond

respectfully and efficiently to people of different cultures, ages, races, religions, and sexual

orientations, ethnic and financial backgrounds.

Working with such a culturally diverse clientele, case management concept is influenced by

cultural competence as it complements the values of self-determination, client-centered care,

and individual dignity. Nurse case manager adheres to professional values, ethics, and

standards of care. He/she recognizes how these values both conflict and accommodate the

needs of a diverse multicultural clientele. It promotes respectful and effective communication,

education, coordination of care between client and case manager as well as promotes positive

and understanding relationships. Respectable relationships between patient/family and case

manager have shown to improve compliance with individual’s plan of care and collaboration

with healthcare team thus reducing the dollar costs. When working with patients, nurse case

manager develops strategies to understanding one’s personal/cultural values and beliefs and

how these influence practice while refraining from personal beliefs/biases as such do influence

relationships with clients and families. Quality patient care cannot be achieved without

addressing cultural competence and sensitivity.

Primary care case management model enables clear communication/ education with the

patient and family as well as the addressing of any concerns/questions that client and family

may have in a timely matter while ensuring that cultural sensitivity and competence even in the

times of follow up. Case management in a primary care setting can particular be of interest as it

shows to be one of the most effective in providing quality and cost effective care to the

patients of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It allows case manager to establish strong

patient-client relationship which promotes positive bonding, trust, and compliance with plan of

care. As indicated in the study by Elwyn, Williams, Roberts, Newcombe, and Vincent, besides

the psychological benefits, it allows case manager time for assessment, review,

implementation, coordination, and referrals of patient care services accordingly while ensuring

that patient adheres to treatments and procedures as prescribed through.

In the conclusion, as a health care environment becomes more complex, nursing case

managers become more important and vital members of the healthcare team that act as

patients’ advocates, coordinators of care, educators, confidentiality protectors, and experts

that empower clients to understand and access healthcare system in a sufficient and effective

way while decreasing the healthcare dollars use.

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