

## Incorporating CMCN into Career Ladders in the Health Care Industry

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Quality indicators are used throughout the healthcare industry to determine how to identify best practice and make changes based on data. They are driven by standards set forth in accreditation bodies such as NCQA (National Committee for Quality Assurance) and URAC (Utilization Review Accreditation Commission). These organizations have noted standards for UM functions throughout organizations that provide utilization management to its members. Both NCQA and URAC promote standards to ensure that only appropriately trained, qualified clinical personnel conduct and oversee the utilization review process.

Many organizations are promoting that their nursing staff be credentialed in a certification process that supports expert knowledge in the area in which they work. Effective use of certification programs, such as CMCN, can be promoted in your organization to maintain the expert status of nursing staff doing criteria review daily. This global knowledge base supports changes that can be made within the organization based on standards put forth by regulatory bodies. It promotes quality performance and understanding of the utilization management function within payer systems.

CMCN (Certified Managed Care Nurse) is a certification that provides an in depth knowledge base of utilization management in the environment of the health care management industry. It has become an important validation to organizations for their nursing staff to be sufficiently educated in up to date managed care knowledge. Many times organizations are looking to hire nurses that have 3 or more years experience within the acute care setting but have no additional knowledge in the background and understanding of the managed care arena. Nurses who are better prepared to understand the basics of managed care will be able to understand the benefits and risks to health care decisions.

How does an organization go about promoting and incorporating certification within their nurse's practice? Many organizations seek the most experienced nurses to work in utilization management review. Career ladders are a significant area to place the requirement of certification for their staff. My employer, Anthem, has placed the requirement of CMCN for those nurses who want to become a Level II or III nurse within the utilization management review area. Anthem has taken the position that nurses need to understand the managed care arena and healthcare today with its many issues and concerns. The career ladder has made a clear delineation between a beginning nurse at the company and one who has chosen to have a more global understanding of the healthcare environment. The company has chosen to see certifying nurses in the CMCN as value added for the nursing staff. This focus of striving for excellent quality outcomes based at the member level is evident by promoting CMCN within our company. Nurses with a better understanding and skill set to work with complex patients and their needs are able to meet the company's core values, vision, and mission of the people they serve within the community. Professionals seek to become more knowledgeable in their fields and

we have been fortunate that the ABMCN has developed a certification specifically focused for managed care.

It is important for nurses to get involved and talk to their managers and directors in utilization management of the importance of certification practice. Share insights with the company's nursing leaders and promote a project plan to get executives to support the idea of the nursing expert within their companies. Clinical ladders help to give nursing staff something to strive for within the company hierarchy which can be tied to incentives to promote expert status within your utilization review areas. It is the value added endeavor to have nurses well versed in managed care to promote critical thinking decisions daily to support their member's needs. This concept helps support growth and development of the company by impacting our members at an individual level. Take the step in creating change within the environment in which you work. The certification process is beneficial in creating quality outcomes throughout our healthcare industry and creating a nursing staff better able to handle an ever changing health care environment.