

Hiring A Geriatric Care Manager by: Anita Kamiel, R.N., M.P.S.



Being a caregiver for an elderly adult can be fraught with unforeseen and challenging situations that many relatives are ill equipped to handle. Managing all the details and logistics required for situating an elderly parent either in their home after a hospital stay or in a facility of some kind can be daunting for a child or senior spouse. That is when it is often a good idea to hire a professional geriatric care manager (GCM).

But, wait – What is a geriatric care manager?

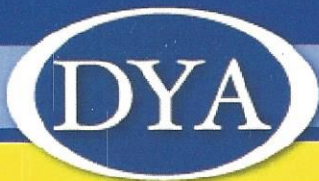
GCMs are usually social workers, but they could be nurses or psychologists or someone in a geriatric health related field, that specialize in the care and problems associated with the elderly. They are certified through an independent agency to manage all aspects of the aging adult. They are totally familiar with Medicare, Medicaid, hospitals, rehab centers and home care through both private pay and long term care insurance.

GCMs can provide the all-important continuity of care when there are multiple professionals to manage and/or when transitions need to be made. They can also provide useful input for resources pertaining to a specific health situation.

GCMs work as advocates for the geriatric patient in various settings and visit the client on a regular basis. They and their team are available 24/7 by phone to the patient and family for emergencies, updates and consultation and are always able to take charge when a problem arises. They charge by the hour after an initial consultation fee and are a godsend when the family lives far away.

With the geriatric population aged 65+ set to double from 35 million in 2000 to 72 million in 2030, it is important to start thinking about how to manage them all. This field is rapidly expanding with the Aging Life Care Association, the professional organization of GCMs, reporting that it is growing steadily with 300 new members annually.





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The time to consider a GCM is when an aging loved one experiences declining health, questions regarding long term care arise, a discharge from a hospital or facility is imminent, end-of-life planning begins, and if family members can't agree on caregiving decisions or are not happy with current care providers. Difficult interpersonal relationships often come to the fore at these times and an oft overlooked benefit of involving this type of third party professional is their ability to work through unpleasant family-to-family sticky situations should they arise.

GCMs help with lining up proper housing, home care service, scheduling doctor appointments, as well as suggesting social activities. When close family members live far away, they are essential to oversee the daily care of the client. They can also help with elderproofing a senior's home from assessment through to installation. They are handy when a move is necessary which is often extremely stressful for an elderly person. They help with all the logistics of such a move including arranging for the physical packing up of all belongings all the way through to shutting off or transferring the utilities.

Starting with a GCM can be costly, but once wheels are set in motion, costs should settle down. In New York City, initial 1.5 hour initial assessments begin at \$250 and go up from there. Subsequent hourly rates range from \$150 - \$ 200 per hour.

Since you will be working closely with this individual on critical personal decisions, personality chemistry is key in this situation. It is important to get references from both the professional and client side to make the relationship successful and happy. Turn to your doctor or allied health professional for a reference and canvas your friends and acquaintances for personal recommendations. You can also consult the credentialing agencies such as the Aging Life Care Association formerly the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers, the National Association of Social Workers, the National Academy of Certified Care Managers or the Commission for Case Managers for certified GCMs in your area. Once you find a few to consider, it would be wise to ask them for a client you can speak to regarding their experiences before you decide whom to engage.

Most important, you must hire a flexible and caring GCM that makes the needs and preferences of your loved one paramount.

Anita Kamiel, RN, MPS, is the founder and owner of David York Home Healthcare Agency, licensed by the State of New York. She holds a master's degree in gerontological administration and is fully acquainted with all factors related to eldercare services and the latest guidelines for seniors. Thirty years ago, she realized there was a need for affordable, quality home health aide services provided and supervised by caring individuals. You can contact her at 718-376-7755 or at www.davidyorkagency.com. David York Agency is also on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and LinkedIn.



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