

# CASE MANAGER/CARE COORDINATOR



## get on the behavioral health path

### Is this the job for me?

Take this quick quiz to find out if case manager/care coordinator is a good direction for you:

- 1 **Want to learn about medical conditions and treatments, as well as health care resources and services?**  
 YES  NO
- 2 **Do you like to help others solve problems?**  
 YES  NO
- 3 **Do you like to network with others?**  
 YES  NO
- 4 **Do you work well with a wide variety of people?**  
 YES  NO
- 5 **Do you like to collaborate?**  
 YES  NO
- 6 **Are you a good listener?**  
 YES  NO
- 7 **Do you want to get into a career in about four years?**  
 YES  NO

If you answered yes to several of these questions, you may be on the right track!

### What's it all about?

Case managers, who are also often called care coordinators, help patients and their families determine their individual needs, develop a plan to meet those needs, and then gain access to appropriate health care. They also monitor a patient's care to ensure it is safe, effective, cost-efficient and timely.

Case managers/care coordinators often work with a wide variety of patients, including children, youth, seniors, people experiencing disabilities, or those with drug or alcohol addictions. To be successful in their jobs, case managers/care coordinators must have a strong background in medical conditions and treatments, as well as an in-depth understanding of available resources and services.

### What do case managers/care coordinators do?

The responsibilities of case managers/care coordinators vary greatly, depending on where they work. For example, in an insurance company, a case manager/care coordinator may validate a patient's eligibility for benefits, while in a hospital, they may help a patient prepare for discharge. In general, here are some common responsibilities of a case manager/care coordinator:

- Evaluate patients to assess and identify their individual needs.
- Develop and implement a plan of care to meet patients' goals.
- Explore options and available services. Identify service providers.

- Determine eligibility for programs.
- Provide referrals, resources and patient education.
- Evaluate plan of care and revise, as needed.
- Work closely with patients, family members and other health care providers.
- Maintain accurate records about treatments, goals and progress.
- Communicate with payers, such as Medicaid or insurance companies.
- Monitor care to avoid duplication of tests and services.
- Arrange visits to health care providers.
- Organize home nursing, therapy services and respite care.
- Handle prescription refills.
- Help patients gain access to transportation, equipment and supplies, financial assistance programs or other appropriate services.
- Provide tools, such as binders or forms, to help patients and their families organize and track medical information.

### How much money can I make?

Wages for case managers/care coordinators vary based on the particular job, setting and level of education, and specific wage information for this occupation is not available. To give you an idea of what you can earn, managers in Alaska earn an average hourly wage of \$31.63, and have an average annual salary of \$65,790.40.

### **How do I become a case manager/care coordinator? How long does it take?**

Educational requirements for case managers/care coordinators vary depending on the particular job. In general, you must:

- Have a high school diploma or GED.
- Complete either an associate's degree, bachelor's degree or higher.
- May take an exam to become certified in case management.

Case managers/care coordinators often earn degrees in the areas of counseling or social work, although some have completed registered nursing programs. Length of education depends on the specific degree. Typically, associate's degrees take two years to complete and bachelor's degrees take about four years.

Learn more about education programs in Alaska that can prepare you to become a case manager/care coordinator by reviewing the "training providers" section later in this publication.

### **Attention high school students!**

If you think you might want to become a case manager/care coordinator, the time to start planning is now. In general, you should take four years of English, three years of math, three years of social studies, two years of science and possibly two years of a second language. You should also consider taking college preparatory or advanced placement (AP) courses. Other recommended classes and electives include:

- Computer applications
- Keyboarding
- Ethnic and gender studies
- Legal system
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Political science
- Economics
- Anthropology
- Anatomy and physiology
- Health education
- Introduction to health care
- Safety and first aid

You should also discuss your plans with a teacher, counselor or parent, and check to see what work-based learning opportunities, such as field trips, job shadowing and internships, are available in your community.

### **Are there jobs available?**

A recent vacancy study estimated there are currently more than 160 job openings for case managers/care coordinators in Alaska, making it one of the state's health care "hot jobs."

### **Where are the jobs?**

Case managers/care coordinators work in nearly all areas of health care, including insurance companies, home health agencies, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, social service and public health agencies, or government programs.

### **What else is on this pathway?**

Want to learn about other possible opportunities in the behavioral health career pathway? Be sure to read about human service workers and social workers – other behavioral health "hot jobs" in Alaska!

