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GERIATRIC CARE MANAGEMENT PAYS FOR ITSELF

The cost of hiring a geriatric care manager is a fraction of the savings they produce. Geriatric care management results in better health and financial outcomes, easily paying for itself over a period of a few years or less. Geriatric care management also provides more cash in the bank because the senior's family members will not be absent from work as much and are less likely to have to leave the workforce to care for the parent.

Care managers reduce caregiver stress and act as an objective third party mediator, resolving family conflicts and minimizing family disputes related to long term care. When a senior's life is better, the family life is better too.

A geriatric care manager plans and coordinates the care and safety of the elderly to improve their quality of life and to maintain their independence. They have extensive knowledge about the availability, quality, and costs of elder care services and communities in their city or region. Care managers are experts at sorting through the array challenging decisions facing an aging senior and their family to identify the best solutions. The family is usually experiencing this for the first time, whereas the care manager has been there many times.

A geriatric care manager uses training and experience with issues related to aging and elder care including social work, nursing, gerontology, nutrition, and psychology, in order to be the point person and advocate for a senior, often with a focus on maintaining the senior's independence for as long as possible. Geriatric care managers help manage chronic needs for those suffering from Alzheimer's disease or other dementia.

A geriatric care manager can act as a liaison on all matters concerning the senior for families that provide long-distance care. The care manager will keep track of all documents and instructions for a long distance senior to ensure that the senior's treatment is consistent, whether they are living at home, in an assisted living setting, board and care, or a nursing home. The care manager can save the family money with crisis management so that out-of-town family members don't spend top dollar for emergency travel because of an unexpected hospitalization or other crisis, and acts as a liaison to the family at a distance, updating them through emails, phone calls, or a mobile app.

Geriatric care managers help individuals, caregivers, and families adjust and cope with the challenges of aging by doing any number of the following:

- Audit the senior's home for falls risks and provide a referral to a contractor for safety retrofitting if necessary.
- Help make arrangements to purchase or rent medical equipment for lifting, moving, and ease of use of the bathroom facilities.
- Screen, arrange, monitor, and support in-home help and/or caregivers.
- Visit the senior on a routine basis to make sure they are safe, and ensure they are eating and that there's food in the refrigerator and cupboards.
- Make sure prescriptions are refilled and watch for medication hazards such as not taking medication on time or taking the wrong dosage.
- Monitor the senior's finances and bill paying.
- Identify unnecessary services such as excess medical testing or overlapping caregiver shifts.
- Monitor against fraud or elder abuse.
- Make medical appointments and assure the senior gets to them, perhaps personally providing transportation to and from appointments, and then making sure doctors' orders are understood and followed.
- Advise on Medicare and Medicaid coverage and Veterans Administration benefits, uncovering unused benefits, and providing a referral to a specialist to help with complex benefits eligibility and asset protection strategies and tactics including asset transfers, gifting, and trust set up.
- Provide a referral to an elder law attorney who will prepare powers of attorney and a living will.
- Recommend a reverse mortgage specialist.
- Provide placement into an appropriate assisted living or nursing community so that the senior does not have to be moved again or repeatedly.
- Assisting with moving the senior to or from a retirement complex, assisted living facility, board and care, rehabilitation facility, or nursing home.
- Monitor the care of a senior in assisted living or a nursing home.

Hiring a geriatric care manager for either a one-time assessment with a written plan or for ongoing support will lower expenses in the long run by helping you plan ahead and avoid hasty decisions that end up being avoidable and expensive. Your geriatric care manager can arrange and manage the process of building a "circle of care" in which family members, friends, and community members help with caregiving duties such as driving, grocery shopping, and simply spending time with your loved one.