



MLCC
Medical & Life Care Consulting

Practice Social Distancing

INSIGHTS

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP, ARTICLES, CASE STUDIES & MORE

BY: MEDICAL & LIFE CARE CONSULTING

MAY 2021

POST-PANDEMIC CASE MANAGEMENT:

WHAT'S CHANGED, WHAT REMAINS THE SAME, AND HOW TO PREPARE FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Workers' compensation and case management are inextricable from the other. Medical management professionals involved in helping an employee travel the road to recovery and return safely to work hold two different—but not discrete—responsibilities: First, to the affected employee, and second to the patient's employer.

Case managers have the vision to see who and what kind of information and resources are necessary to contribute to an employee's rehabilitation plan. They also have the talent to know which resources will best support the employee's return to work.

The modern workers' compensation treatment

ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

- WORKERS' COMP CASE MANAGEMENT IN 2020
- THE FUTURE OF CASE MANAGEMENT
- THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

management model (closely tied to the coordinated care model) serves employees not simply from the isolated physical diagnosis but from a broader, holistic approach to ultimately enable the employee to return to work in optimal condition.

Having one point of contact for each of the stakeholders in the treatment and recovery streamlines the process and boosts quality. That centralized tracking helps ensure exceptional care, avoid redundancies and omissions, and keeps the treatment care plan moving forward smoothly and effectively. It also ensures that information is relayed responsibly to the claims adjuster and the patient's employer, to advocate for any requisite workers' compensation or return-to-work plans.

WHAT'S CHANGED

It feels like everything in 2020 changed in an instant – even within case management, there were some

It feels like everything in 2020 changed in an instant ...



significant innovations that took place rather quickly.

One upgrade to the industry that the pandemic pushed to the forefront was the increased reliance on technology to keep operations moving along. Quarantines and concerns around viral spread prevented many people from feeling comfortable visiting on-site medical facilities, and case managers were unable to meet with injured workers in person to evaluate their individual claims. As with many others in all industries, workers' compensation professionals inevitably found ways to [expedite advancements](#) that would have happened naturally over time.

The quick shift to accessible [telehealth](#) has enabled workers' compensation professionals to continue to serve employees and employers. This pivot allowed for the ongoing processing of claims, which helped to avoid massive backlogs

and bottlenecks. Similarly, even though injured workers were not able to schedule visits in-person with their physicians, many were able to receive cursory exams and assessments through video and phone calls.

Telehealth has also reframed a case manager's obligations in small but meaningful ways. With some remote appointments now allowed and accepted, everyone involved gets a bit more time to focus on the primary goal: helping injured workers heal and get back to work in a safe and supported manner.

WHAT REMAINS THE SAME

Technology and workloads may change, but the nature of the rehabilitation plan leader role will not. A case manager will continue to be an expert in the field, coordinating stakeholder efforts to create the best possible outcomes for both employees and employers.

In its truest form, the medical management role does not change. It simply demands being adaptable in times of change, and open to finding unique and innovative ways to support an employee's wellbeing throughout the workers' compensation process. Case managers still must work efficiently and effectively to ensure that injured workers get the quality of care and service they need.

Medical management case managers will still require a versatile skill set and personal attributes such as empathy, balance, and consistency. Pandemic or not, in person or remotely, it's imperative that we communicate thoughtfully with employees as they go through the process of getting ready to go back to work.

The delivery methods will inevitably continue to evolve, from traditional in-person settings to technology such as video-based appointments and apps, but the need to connect will remain. Physicians will need to come to terms with an evolving technological world, but many are still hesitant to release workers into the work setting without a physical, in-person examination. Case management can work to assuage those concerns, just as we advocate for injured workers in every other way.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR WHAT'S NEXT

As we conquer one medical threat, the next challenge will present itself. We can only hope never again to encounter anything on the level of COVID-19. Still, it's important to retain the institutional knowledge and processes that have been most successful in supporting injured employees and their rehabilitation and recovery during this time.

While we remain committed to the functional practice of nurse case management that has served our communities best, it is important to train case managers to prepare for new challenges. There will always be a new medical threat to be managed, new technology to learn, and evolved medical management methods to be implemented. To ensure that case managers and claims professionals are prepared for the next challenge it is necessary to provide opportunities for continuing education, such as MLCC's **INJURY INSIGHT** series.

Another priority for all medical management workers will be to adapt, upgrade, and integrate technologies to support an ever-digitalized world. As we continue implementing new technologies, it is imperative to train case management professionals to use them effectively in order to convey confidence and competence to our patients and clients.

WE'RE HERE

If you're looking for a medical management partner to help your organization pursue the best possible case management outcomes for your employees or injured workers, you're looking for Medical and Life Care Consulting (MLCC). With 20 years in business, and thousands of cases served, MLCC is a strong partner [for](#)

[any organization, third party administrator, or insurance company managing workers'](#) compensation cases. The magic of having great processes and medical management professionals in place is the improved efficiency of case management referrals and care designed to help injured and ill workers recover. MLCC has a proven record of being able to do just that.

[Contact us today](#) to schedule a complimentary consultation and find out how we can help with your medical management or workers' compensation claim management.