IMO's Approach to Catastrophic Case Management

A Lifelong Commitment to Care

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Catastrophic case management is a type of case management that handles cases that are so devastating that they result in injuries or illnesses so serious that they require life-long care. Competent and immediate catastrophic case management is essential when dealing with severe life-changing injuries or illnesses.

Plano based Injury Management Organization (IMO), a leader in the managed care industry for over 34 years, strongly affirms the belief that effective catastrophic case management requires an immediate and exceptionally competent multi-disciplinary approach. This involves triage coordination between acute care, rehabilitation, and post-acute care providers. Trained Nurse Case Managers excel in this area, leveraging their expertise in patient care, trauma and rehabilitation to provide patients with the best possible healthcare options, protocols and communication. They coordinate, facilitate and follow the injured person's treatment plans from start to finish, ensuring all medical and psychological needs are evaluated, integrated and addressed.

Whenever a catastrophic injury or illness occurs, the road to recovery can be physically arduous and mentally overwhelming. Injuries such as compound fractures, severe back or spinal cord damage, burns, loss of limbs, etc., can result in exhaustive, long-term medical care. It is at this point that a trained catastrophic case management team enters the patient's recovery process. Their heightened responsibility and ability to architect and coordinate the integration of the various healthcare providers is vital. Thereby helping to ensure that the patient receives a personalized comprehensive care plan to be implemented and maintained on a timely basis.

The primary goal is to facilitate and coordinate care among healthcare providers to ensure the injured person receives the best possible treatment while managing costs and reducing long-term risks. Ultimately it is to assist patients to obtain their maximum medical improvement and to achieve their maximum quality of life. If they can return to their previous employment, this is ideal. Catastrophic case managers are essential to this recovery process. They ensure that all aspects of a patient's care are addressed and professionally assessed, from medical treatment to emotional support. Their role is not just about managing medical needs but also about helping patients navigate through the complexities of their new reality. They advocate for the injured person's needs, ensuring they get the best possible outcomes, while supporting their return to normal life.

Elisabeth Barnes, a Registered Nurse and Certified Case Manager and IMO's Director of Case Management knows firsthand how critically important catastrophic case management is and how this service can effectively improve outcomes for patients. "Making a positive difference in the lives of injured individuals is such a rewarding experience for me," she explains. "My years of professional experience in the workers' compensation arena has taught me the value of building personal relationships, advocacy, collaboration in addition to timely specialized care coordination. I am so grateful that IMO assigns such high priority to providing elite level customer care and has assembled such an amazing team of experienced Nurse Case managers."

In fact, the latest Texas Department of Insurance Network Report Card confirms what IMO's clients have come to know – IMO delivers the highest overall satisfaction with health care and exceptional return-to-work outcomes.

The following is a protocol overview that IMO uses as a guide to help facilitate its claims program.

IMO's "Five E" Approach to Catastrophic Claims

1 Empathy: The nurse case manager should always demonstrate empathy and compassion for the injured worker and their well-being. Compassion and connection go hand in hand when it comes to catastrophic nurse case management. A friendly face, a family member, a confident expert, in person or on the phone, and being in the right place at the right time are critically important.

2 Engagement: Each employee starts their day thinking that they will complete their job and return home to their family just as we all do every day. When someone is catastrophically injured, their lives are completely disrupted in ways few can imagine. Time is of the essence in these life altering circumstances. Being in the right place at the right time to meet the injured workers where they are—physically, mentally, and emotionally cannot be overemphasized. Immediate response, care and support can significantly mitigate the impact of severe long-term injuries.

3 Expertise: Seasoned experience as a Certified Case Manager (CCM) is critically important to those requiring catastrophic care. Certification designates a high level of expertise and an ongoing commitment to education and knowledge of new clinical, psychosocial and other healthcare related protocols. This knowledge helps to ensure that Individualized support is provided at all phases of injury with recovery by highly qualified, educated and engaged clinicians.

4 Enlightenment: Comprehensive catastrophic case management involves communication, coordination, collaboration and facilitation of multiple disciplines including a variety of physicians, health care specialists and post-acute care providers. Ongoing liaison efforts between the injured person, medical professionals, family members, employers and insurance carriers ensure that treatment plans are seamlessly integrated and that all parties are on the same page.

5 Efficiency: Effective cost containment is an appropriate goal at every level of the recovery process. The key is reducing costs without sacrificing quality medical care. This is best accomplished by proactively implementing aggressive cost containment strategies and negotiating from the strength of a team of clinical and financial personnel to ensure the lowest possible cost.

Closing Statement

Catastrophic case management is a demanding but rewarding field of healthcare that focuses on providing integrated comprehensive care for individuals suffering from severe, life-changing injuries and illnesses. By coordinating a wide range of services and treatments, case managers play a crucial role in reducing long-term risks and costs while ensuring the highest quality patient care. When tragedy strikes, it is critically important to engage expert clinical support at the right time, the right place, with the right resources. That's when you need a premier managed care partner like Injury Management Organization to stand in the gap alongside you and your injured workers and deliver the optimum catastrophic case management support they deserve. Whether managing workers' compensation or group health benefits, your organization will receive a team that cares for your people like family.

IMO has been providing Catastrophic Case Management for over 34 years and we are ready to serve you! IMO now offers Complex Case Management for the Group Health arena through a division of IMO called "TouchPoint Pathways." To learn more, go to InjuryManagement.com or TouchPointPathways.com

To set up a time with our Director of Case Management, please email Elisabeth Barnes at: ebarnes@injurymanagement.com

For more information please visit our website at

INJURYMANAGEMENT.COM