Ways to Get Involved for National Case Management Week

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By Pat Stricker, Senior Vice President

Happy National Case Management Week!

I know this may seem a little early, but if I wait until next month's newsletter it will be too late. So I thought I would rather be among the first to congratulate you, rather than do it belatedly. This year's National Case Management Week is October 8-14. The theme is “Together We Stand Strong”. As a group, we (case managers) develop close working relationships and have a strong sense of friendship and camaraderie. This is evident each year at our national conference, when you see case managers from across the country (and from other countries) come together as “friends”. It is also shown monthly at local chapter meetings across the country. We support each other and know that the more we stand together on important issues that affect our profession, the stronger we become.

The goal of Case Management Week is to educate payers, providers, regulators and consumers about the tremendous value case managers bring to the successful delivery of health care. Case managers act as advocates, educators, coordinators, facilitators, navigators, and resource managers to help patients understand and manage their condition, find and gain access to services, and obtain high quality, cost-effective care. People need to be aware of your dedication, commitment, and passion for working with patients and their families in these endeavors. These things make a tremendous difference in their lives and in the health care delivery system. National Case Management Week focuses on making people aware of what you do and provides an opportunity to celebrate your accomplishments. Case managers have been honored with their own week since CMSA initiated
it in 1999. As other organizations began to establish Case Management Weeks, CMSA approached them to collaborate and have all organizations celebrate at the same time, during the second week of October, in order to strengthen the movement and avoid confusion. The National Case Management Week brochure developed by CMSA gives more detailed information about the progression of Case Management Week accomplishments and celebrations over the years. Many people believe case management was only developed over the past 20 years or so. But that could not be further from the truth. Case management actually began in the early 19th century with the development of professionalized social work and publicly-funded human services that provided services to the poor and needed. The first case managers were social workers and public health nurses who provided care and contained health care costs by coordinating services. This was prior to any organized government role in the delivery of these services. If you want to know more about the history of case management, you can refer to this previous newsletter article. There may be some of you who are thinking that it is great that we have this week to celebrate our successes, but you may not think there is anything you can do to help promote Case Management. If so, I think you need to re-think that. If you read the history of case management, you learned about Mary Gombash, one of our pioneer case managers from the 1970s who was integral in the formation of CMSA. She had a vision for case management and the commitment and dedication to work tirelessly to make case management a valued profession that is an integral part of our health care delivery system. As part of her mentoring, she encouraged others who felt they were only one person and really could not offer anything significant to:

“Join the association of your choice and volunteer to assist wherever your talents lie. Ask what is being done to spearhead collective efforts to educate lawmakers, employers, health care consumers, and the media. Don’t leave it to someone else. Your future may be at stake.”

And that is perfect advice today. We need to stand together to enhance and strengthen our profession. All of us need to do our part. So get involved in whatever way you can.
CMSA has made it easy for all of us to get involved by developing a detailed 25-page Communication and Media Guide to help offer ideas and suggestions for planning local activities for Case Management Week. It contains:

**Ideas for Celebrating National Case Management Week**

- Activities for Individuals, Community Organizations, and Employers, Government, Health Providers, Professional Organizations, Social Media, and News

**Ideas for Promoting CM Week with Sample Documents**

- Host Events to introduce the community to CM
- Create Social Networking Opportunities on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr
- Create a Blog to provide commentary or news about health care, case management, and other related news
- Internet Marketing: Communicate with members and potential members using “high tech” (the internet) and “high touch” (skills of local chapter). Ideas to build or enhance your local chapter website. Other ideas are offered also, in case you don't have website.
- Newspaper, Radio, and TV Marketing Opportunities
- Communication Hints
- “Do’s” and “Don'ts” of Direct Mail Checklist
- Public Relations

**Sample Promotional Documents**

- Project Proposal
- Press Release
- Media Advisory
Even if you are not currently involved in any planning activities, look at this document and see if there are some ideas that look like something you would be interested in doing. There are numerous activities to get involved in, so find one and consider volunteering your time to help your local chapter or your work organization to help promote National Case Management Week. CMSA has also included promotional products that can be purchased for your celebrations. What could be easier than that?

Case management has been around for more than 115 years and it continues to take on more significance all the time. It has become a basic foundation in the health care delivery system. Let’s all continue to work together to assure our profession continues to prosper and grow. Congratulations on your successes and thank you for all your dedication, commitment, and hard work!

Happy National Case Management Week!!