



## 10 Reasons Certification in Care Management Makes Sense

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Whether you are just beginning your career or are a veteran in the field, obtaining certification in care management helps you stand out from the crowd. There are at least ten benefits and rewards for earning certification through the National Academy of Certified Care Managers (NACCM).

### **1. Add a Prestigious Credential to Your Name**

It can be difficult to set yourself apart from the crowded field of care management. With more and more people advertising themselves as experts, it can become confusing for clients looking for truly experienced care managers. Adding a CMC after your name is one of the most effective ways to signal to clients, peers, and referral sources that you have the education, knowledge, and skills, and are the best choice for the job.

### **2. Confidence**

For most of us, voluntarily sitting for an exam is scary. It requires commitment and fortitude. Let's face it, it's risky to have your knowledge and skills scrutinized through standardized testing. Self-doubt can creep in. Test-taking anxiety generates a thousand excuses to halt your forward momentum. Even the most seasoned professional can get caught up in self-doubt and fear of failure. But if all those fears are conquered, passing the exam makes victory so satisfying. Succeeding instills confidence and shows the world you've achieved mastery. Many professionals cite increased confidence in their critical thinking and professional abilities as a major benefit of certification.

### **3. Professional Autonomy**

When professionals earn certification, they have verified their skills and abilities through a rigorous exam. Certified care managers expect more freedom to practice independently than those who aren't certified. This ties in with their rising level of confidence in their own abilities and that of their employer.

### **4. Enhanced marketability, employability, and opportunity for advancement**

Certification can help open new doors and generate a competitive advantage when seeking a new job or promotion. Employers often prefer hiring those who have demonstrated dedication to the field by earning certification. This may be in part because certification helps employers take the guesswork out of hiring since the exam has already measured the practitioner's proficiency.

The Aging Life Care Association promotes members to the "Advanced Professional" level after attaining the CMC certification. Advanced status unlocks more member benefits and provides better positioning in the "Find an Expert" search function used by consumers on the Association website.

## **5. Economic advantage**

Researchers have attempted to quantify the impact of certification on pay. The data is mixed, and a salary increase can never be guaranteed, but there is some evidence showing certified professionals have an economic advantage. Eisemon and Cline (2006) identified an average \$10,000 increased salary for certified nurses. Tahan (2005) studied the case management field and noted a “rising trend of certification being a required qualification for employment, with evidence of financial rewards given to professionals who achieve such certification.”

For those in private practice, certification serves as a means of increasing marketability, thus leading to greater business opportunities.

For employers, certification helps to justify a salary differential and it may be the critical benchmark employees must reach before moving into a higher-level position.

## **6. Heightened job satisfaction for employees and less staff turnover for employers**

Hiring certified workers is thought to improve employee satisfaction and reduce staff turnover. Those who are certified tend to have a higher levels of job satisfaction than those who aren't certified. This may be because certification garners more respect and recognition.

Additionally, to maintain credentials, those who are certified continue to develop professionally by taking time to enhance their knowledge and learn new skills. Learning promotes a feeling of competence. The more competent someone feels, the better they perform and more satisfied they are with their job.

## **7. Better compliance with regulations and conditions of funders and payers**

Requirements for certification often make their way into regulations, become conditions of service/participation or are necessary for third party reimbursement. For example, long-term care insurance often requires care managers be certified to be eligible for reimbursement. Grantors may require members of a team to be certified to be eligible for grant funding. Certification helps to address the ever-growing requirements of regulatory bodies, funders and third-party payers.

## **8. Substitutes for or augments professional licensure**

Although care management is not a licensed profession, many practitioners hold licenses in fields such as social work, nursing, mental health counseling and other health and human service professions. Certification knits together these diverse professional backgrounds. For those who come to the field through a non-traditional path and are not eligible to be a licensed healthcare provider, certification delivers a respected credential. Regardless of the path taken into the profession, everyone who sits for the test must have supervised work experience, appropriate training in the field and demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities by passing the same validated exam.

## **9. The public tends to prefer working with certified professionals**

Certification helps to address a market need. Studies have shown the public prefers to work with certified professionals. This may be because certification conveys mastery and is a mark of excellence. It gives consumers a way to differentiate between providers, so they can find the most skilled practitioners in the field.

## 10. Risk management – malpractice insurers view certified practitioners as a safer bet

Some insurers offer discounts to certified professionals for liability insurance due to their belief that they have lower liability exposure. Ongoing continuing education requirements to maintain certification help care managers make informed practice decisions that may reduce risk.

While there is no direct causal evidence that certified professionals perform better, there is anecdotal evidence across a range of fields showing a correlation between certification and improved performance. For employers and the public, certification serves as a practical means to help evaluate the success they will find with a care manager.

With so many great reasons to get certified, what are you waiting for? Take your career to the next level and sign up for the National Academy of Certified Care Manager's certification exam today. It will be the best decision you ever made.

### *About the National Academy of Certified Care Managers:*

The National Academy of Certified Care Managers (NACCM) is a non-profit credentialing organization. The mission of NACCM is to support a high level of competence in the practice of care management through the administration of a formal certification and recertification program. Learn more at [www.naccm.net](http://www.naccm.net)

### About the Author



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Jullie Gray is a trained and licensed as a clinical social worker. She combines 35 years of experience working in diverse healthcare settings with her passion for working with older adults and their families.

Jullie is a principal at Aging Wisdom, a care management and consulting practice serving the Seattle Metro area. She is an award-winning care manager, is the president of the National Academy of Certified Care Managers and past president of the Aging Life Care Association.

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