

Finding Care – The Role of the Geriatric Care Manager

[This is the last of the series. All articles are available on the resident website at <https://lathropres.org/wellness-matters/>. Please share your feedback as to what further education may be needed and look for a compilation booklet to be distributed soon]

We have outlined many of the important questions to consider when arranging care in the home. Each situation is unique, but the constant in each is the need to coordinate and oversee that help. While some have capable family involved, a spouse in the home or a child nearby, the challenges can still feel overwhelming. And many times the family or support network is too far away to be adequate day to day. In this case it may be helpful to engage a *Geriatric Care Manager*. This is a professional, usually with a Social Work or Nursing background and a specialty in aging and elder care. Depending on the professional background the certification may differ, but look for accreditation from the **Aging Life Care Association** (formerly the *Natl. Assoc. of Professional Geriatric Care Managers*.) This person may have a solo business, or now more likely be part of a group who can bring a wider range of experiences to bear (*i.e. dementia, palliative or hospice care etc.*)

The Care Manager is engaged to as an advocate and consultant. They will direct the care needs assessment, develop the care plan and hire and supervise the care staff. This person will also monitor medical care, usually arranging and attending doctor's appointments. Most importantly in the case of distant family, the care manager facilitates communication between all involved parties. While being a certified individual or agency implies completion of a rigorous evaluative process and commitment to a professional Code of Ethics, due diligence is required in establishing this important relationship. Here are some question to explore before moving forward:

- What are the primary services provided by your agency/business?
- How many Aging Life Care Professionals are in your agency/business?
- Is there a fee for the initial consultation and, if so, how much?
- What are your professional credentials?
- Are you licensed in your profession?
- How long have you been providing aging life care or care management services?
- Are you available for emergencies?
- Does your company also provide home care services?
- How do you communicate information?
- What are your fees? (These should be provided to the consumer/responsible party in writing prior to services starting.)
- Can you provide me with references?