

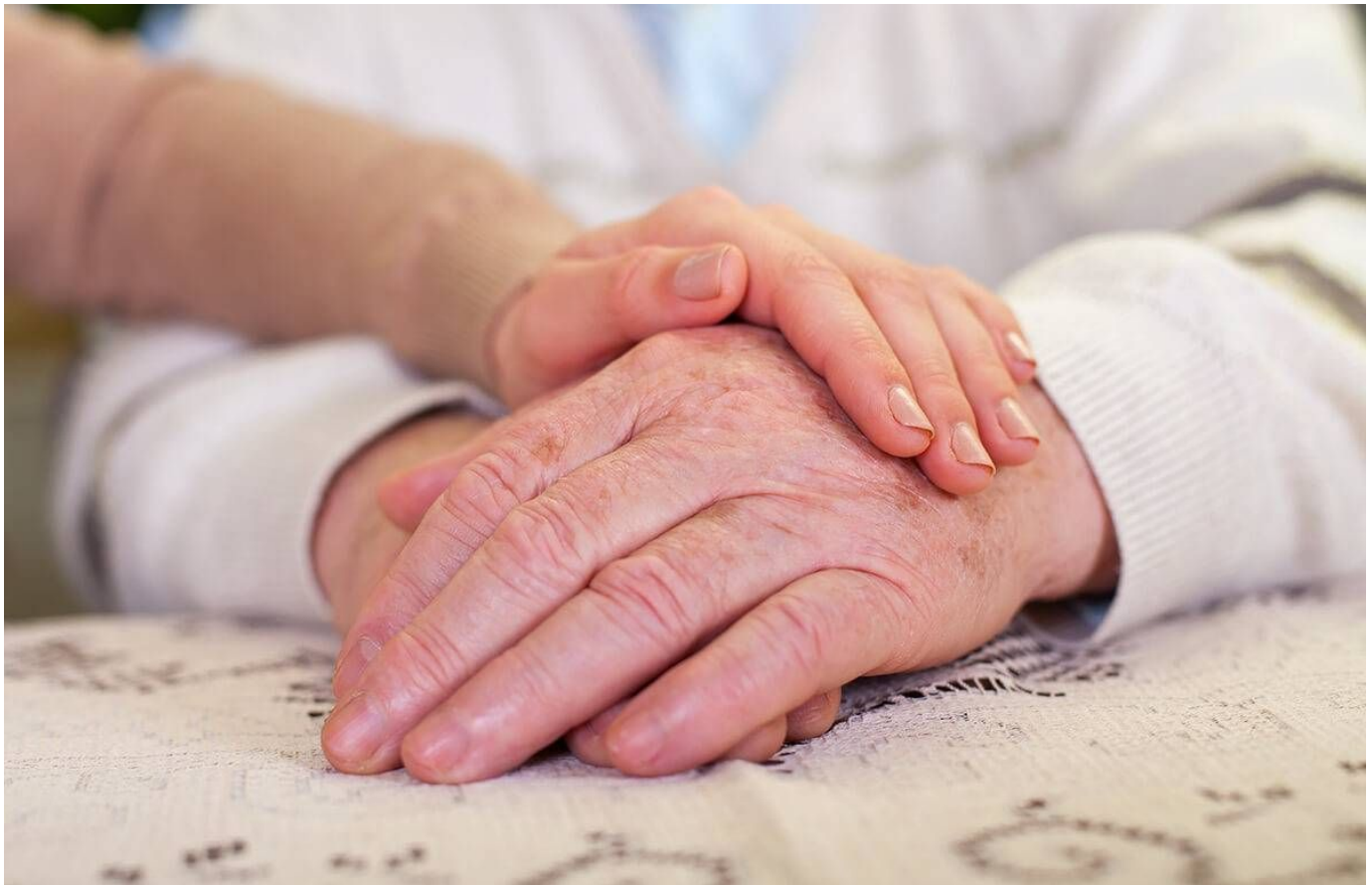
# When to Hire a Geriatric Care Manager for Your Parent

Getting answers to questions and having an advocate can be valuable

By [Sarah Stasik](#) and [Caring.com](#)

April 6, 2018 | [Caregiving](#)

*(This article appeared previously on [Caring.com](#).)*



Credit: Adobe Stock

Geriatric care managers — also known as case managers when employed by a facility — are usually social workers, psychologists, nurses, gerontologists or others with both training and experience in many aspects of elder care.

They can assess needs, handle crises (such as an emergency hospitalization), help place an older adult in a long-term care facility, help solve family

disputes, locate community resources or simply fill in for family caregivers at doctor appointments and assist with other daily care.

Jennifer Voorlas, CEO of [Geriatric Care Consultants, LLC](#), says that a care manager also acts as an advocate for patients and family members, which looks different in every case.

She describes her job as being “the boots on the ground” for the family in need, whether that’s visiting a nursing facility, coordinating care with providers or providing answers for those who simply don’t know what to do next about their loved one’s care. Private care managers, Voorlas notes, are there to advocate for and protect the interests of the client.

## How Geriatric Care Managers Help

Geriatric care managers can organize care needs when there's a change in one's situation, such as when your aging loved one moves or has a health crisis. They can also manage complicated ongoing care, especially when multiple doctors and therapists are involved.

Tammy Hoyle, a retired licensed practical nurse who worked with geriatric and spinal patients for 35 years, says the positive impact of a care manager on provider teams can be enormous.

“The better you work as a team and the more you collaborate with peers and colleagues, the better the outcome for the patient,” she says. “A care coordinator helps ensure all that happens.”

Clinical facility staff often work long hours and could be dealing with personnel shortages. Communication can get lost in that shuffle, says Voorlas. “There are all sorts of opportunities for gaps, and that’s where things can happen.” She says one of her roles is to visit facilities, talk with staff and close those gaps.

Voorlas also points out that while geriatric care managers do work with other providers, they often fill in the gap for family members. Family caregivers who are working or don’t live nearby find their support and advice to be a godsend, she says.

## Most Popular

1. Fitness Influencer Joan MacDonald: It's Not Too Late to Embrace a Healthier Life | **Fitness and Exercise**
2. Taking the Road Slow Traveled | **Travel and Adventures**
3. Happily Aging Without Children | **Living**
4. Life Lessons from My Grandmother's Death | **End of Life**

“Around 80 percent of my clients are adult children who live out of state or are working,” says Voorlas. Those family members simply can’t keep up with all the needs of their loved one, and going it alone results in burnout.

## How Much Geriatric Care Managers Cost

Some local government agencies and charitable groups offer consulting services free or on a sliding scale according to income level.

If you hire a geriatric care manager privately, expect to pay \$75 to \$250 per hour. Private geriatric care management isn’t covered by Medicare or Medicaid plans nor by most private insurance, but it can result in overall cost savings to the patient and family. Additionally, the following factors are important to note when considering the cost of hiring a geriatric care manager:

- Family members can mitigate lost earnings as care managers take over phone calls and provider coordination, which takes time.
- Care managers ensure more positive outcomes for patients, which can reduce hospital readmissions or other health issues that could lead to greater costs.
- Out-of-state family members may be able to engage in less emergency travel with a trusted advocate near their loved one.

## How to Hire a Geriatric Care Manager

Once you find potential geriatric care management providers in your loved one's area, conduct due diligence to ensure you're hiring the right person for your situation.

Hoyle points out that every case is unique; a geriatric patient with severe dementia needs completely different care than someone who's in good health mentally but is dealing with age-related mobility limitations. You'll want to find the care manager who has the right experience for the situation and fits with the personalities of your loved one and other family members.

Voorlas says it's a good idea to meet in person with a potential care manager.

"You need someone who can treat your elder with compassion and dignity, but also who will work well with you and be able to answer your questions." Both Hoyle and Voorlas advise checking credentials and asking for references when hiring a geriatric care manager. Some things to look for include:

- Care Manager Certified (CMC) credentials or other advanced degrees in the field of social work or gerontology
- References from clients who can speak to the care manager's professional and personal skills
- Experience or skill sets that match your loved one's specific needs

## **Questions to Ask a Geriatric Care Manager**

Ultimately, a geriatric care manager takes on a role of deep trust in your family and your loved one's lives. Since he or she can provide peace of mind and other benefits only by working well with you, Voorlas encourages families to ask plenty of questions when consulting with a possible care manager.

Aside from queries about references, credentials and experience, she recommends asking questions such as:

- Are you part of a practice or a single provider?
- Do you have backup when you aren't available? Who is that backup, and what are their credentials?

- What times are you available? Are you available on the weekends?
- How do you approach conflict or concern among the older adult's family members?
- What type of case load do you carry, and how do you deal with burnout?
- What services do you plan to provide?
- What services will you not provide?

Hiring the right geriatric care provider can make a difference in the lives of your loved one and their family, but Voorlas adds that the choice is never final. You can change care managers if needed, and most professionals who realize the situation isn't a great match will even refer you to someone who may be a better option.

## How to Get Started

You can use Caring.com's Senior Living Directory to search for [geriatric care managers](#) by city or ZIP code. Or try these other options:

- **Area Agencies on Aging** Trained staff at your local [Area Agency on Aging](#) can usually provide referrals to geriatric care managers in your area.
- **National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers** Call 520-881-8008 or visit [Caremanager.org](#).
- **Search online** Enter "geriatric care manager" and the name of your loved one's city or town.

*Caring.com expert [Barbara Kate Repa](#) contributed to this article.*

**Sarah Stasik** is a full-time freelance writer and project manager with a background in healthcare revenue cycle management. [Read More](#)

 **By Caring.com**

## Editors Recommendations

Stories Help  
Caregiving Pros  
Know the Person  
Within



Caregiving With  
Siblings: Your  
Questions  
Answered



When Your Parent  
Doesn't Know He  
Has Dementia



## Support Nonprofit Journalism

*Next Avenue is free to consume, but not free to produce. Please become a member today and contribute what you can. Your gift will go directly to sustaining our nonprofit journalism so that we can remain free and accessible to everyone.*

**DONATE TODAY**

[Learn About Next Avenue](#)

**STORIES FROM AROUND THE WEB**

**nextavenue**<sup>®</sup> 

Meeting the needs and unleashing the  
potential of older Americans through media

[About Us](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Sponsorship](#)

[Submissions](#)

[Contact Us](#)

A nonprofit journalism website produced by:



©2023 Next Avenue