

# Enhanced Interview Process for Hiring Exceptional Care Managers

Selecting the right candidate for the role of RN Care Manager is challenging. Oftentimes the classic interview style of asking questions and listening to answers cannot reveal the true potential of a candidate. A successful Ambulatory Care Manager requires a unique skill set to adapt to the complex, fast paced environment of care managing patients in primary care.

The activities listed below are options to consider using in the second phase of an interview process to hire RN Care Managers. A first round of behavioral based interviewing helps to screen candidates for basic skills like communication, ability to get along with others in a collaborative work environment, tolerance to frustration/change/failure, and ability to articulate skill in certain nursing concepts.

The addition of a second interview that incorporates **demonstration** of skill, critical thinking, and understanding of key concepts of population health will help the interviewer quickly determine which candidates are most suited for the role.

*Note that it will take time to prepare a second interview process that incorporates these activities, and it may also require approval from the Human Resources Department of your organization.*

## **Assess ability to understand basic concepts of population health and disease management**

- **Risk stratification**
  - Share an example of the risk stratification algorithm used at your practice
  - Pull together a list of 10-15 (deidentified) patients with risk score and several key clinical data points (diagnoses, psychosocial factors, lab results) *Be sure to include a variety of patients with different risk levels and clinical/psychosocial factors*
  - Have the candidate talk through which patients they would consider enrolling in care management

***Purpose of this exercise:*** *To assess candidate's ability to collect multiple pieces of data, integrate the information, and critically think through which patients might benefit from a care management intervention and why other patients might not benefit.*

- **Managing a diabetes (or other chronic disease) registry**
  - Share a copy of your protocol for management of diabetes
  - Pull together a list of 5-10 (deidentified) patients from the diabetes registry.
    - Include risk score, most recent Hgb A1c and date completed, recency of DM education with a dietitian or DM educator, other pertinent factors
  - Have the candidate talk through a very basic plan for each patient, based upon your protocol for diabetes management

***Purpose of this exercise:** To assess candidate's ability to collect multiple pieces of data, integrate the information, and critically think through how to apply a chronic disease protocol to each individual patient.*

### **Assess proficiency in Microsoft Excel**

- **Create a blood sugar log in Microsoft Excel:** Candidate will complete this as homework, before the interview
  - Provide a list of pretend blood sugar results to the candidate (Include date/time of result and value)
  - Candidate will create an excel spreadsheet template for a blood sugar log and complete the following:
    - Enter the blood sugar results from the sample provided
    - Average the results in the way that they believe will be most useful for the practitioner
    - Email the completed spreadsheet to interview panel lead (this is critical – a paper copy of the spreadsheet will not allow you to assess use of formulas)
  - At the time of interview, ask candidate to talk about their process in developing the spreadsheet

***Purpose of exercise:** RN Care Managers often need to use excel spreadsheets in addition to the EHR. This exercise will enable assessment of candidate's creativity in creating a spreadsheet; basic concepts of manipulating the cells/columns/rows in excel; basic concept of using formulas to average a set of values.*

**Assess understanding of key concepts in collaborating with patients**

- **Teach Back:** Ask candidate to role play with one of the interviewing panelists, using teach back on any medical/clinical concept of their choice
- **Motivational Interviewing:** Ask candidate to describe what motivational interviewing is and give an example of how they have used this technique with a patient/caregiver

***Purpose of exercise:** Skill in these areas is critical to working with patients and helping them make progress toward goals for self-management. The RN Care Manager should demonstrate at least a moderate level of skill and understanding of the importance of meeting patients where they are. This includes letting go of the 'prescriptive' way of telling patients what to do, and using techniques to explore individual motivation to make positive change.*

**Assess ability to lead a care team** (team may include LPN's, MA's Community Health Workers, Health Coaches)

- **Use behavioral based question(s). Some examples are:**
  - Care Management is a relatively new concept in primary care. Some of the staff in the practice may struggle with accepting this role, and may challenge you in different ways. What strategies might you employ if a staff member creates roadblocks to your integrating into the practice culture?
  - You are working in a practice with four providers. Three of these providers are excited about the addition of Care Management, and one is not. What strategies would you try to gain buy-in with the provider that is not interested in having his patients care managed?

***Purpose of exercise:** Tolerance to the frustration of integrating into a new environment is critical for the RN Care Manager – especially when this is a new role being introduced to the practice. It's helpful to assess the candidate's ability to think through these challenging scenarios (or others), and to assess their response to the potential that integration into the practice culture may take time and skill.*