



Community Care Practitioner

Medical Oversight Standard

Medical oversight of a Community Care Practitioner (CCP) should be provided by a Primary Care Physician (PCP). PCPs are considered the "gatekeepers" in the healthcare system since they regulate access to more costly procedures or specialists. They provide long-term management of chronic medical conditions and also serve as the central repository for patients' records. Primary care physicians provide both the first contact for a person with an undiagnosed health concern as well as continuing care of varied medical conditions and would be the most suitable candidate for CCP oversight.

While emergency physicians are sometimes identified as primary care physicians when they care for many primary care cases in the emergency department, emergency physicians are trained and organized to focus on episodic care, acute intervention, stabilization, and discharge or referral to definitive care. In contrast, primary care physicians focus on the basic diagnosis and treatment of common illnesses and medical conditions. After collecting the patient data from the patient interview, physical examination and diagnostic results, the PCP arrives at a differential diagnosis and develops a plan in collaboration with the patient and all other healthcare providers.

The plan may include further testing, specialist referral, medication, therapy, diet or lifestyle changes, patient education, and follow-up of results after treatment. Primary care physicians also counsel and educate patients on safe health behaviors, self-care skills and treatment options, and provide screening tests and immunizations in the doctor's office. They are, however, unable to perform home risk assessments and many unhealthy factors that return a patient back to the hospital go undetected. Ideally, a Community Care Practitioner would fall under this part of the healthcare model. They would assist the PCP in home risk assessments, recommend interventions, and assist the patient in reaching their goals. In summary, a Community Care Practitioner would assist the Primary Care Physician in making that connection to the medical home.

Ideally, a Primary Care Physician who oversees a Community Care Practitioner program should have these qualifications:

- ∞ Family medicine background
- ∞ Experience in the maintenance of the continuum of patient care
- ∞ Member of an established collaborative healthcare structure (i.e. ACOs)
- ∞ Emergency medicine experience
- ∞ Knowledge of the reimbursement fee schedule
- ∞ Knowledge of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
- ∞ Knowledge of prehospital medicine