

CRDAMC nurse case managers showcase services during national Case Management Week

FORT HOOD, Texas—Carl R. Darnall Medical Center nurse case managers celebrated national Case Management Week Oct. 11-17 to showcase the significant contributions and commitments they make to ensure Soldiers are receiving appropriate, comprehensive care.

National Case Management Week, officially proclaimed in 2000, is not just about recognizing case managers for the work they do, it's also about promoting awareness and education about case management.

NCMs provide a unique, sometimes misunderstood, service to their patients. Nurse case managers perform a multitude of services such as completing assessments, coordinating referrals, monitoring care and recovery plans, performing crisis management, and serving as a liaison between command and network providers for Soldiers seeing both on- and off-post providers.

Col. Brian Kondrat, deputy commander for Inpatient Services, acknowledged he developed a greater appreciation of the vital role of nurse case management over the last few years.

“I have a greater appreciation of the hard work and dedication you all put in every day to help Soldiers and their families manage their complex care,” Kondrat told the group at their closing ceremony Oct. 16. “What you do matters to those Soldiers and their families. It can be difficult sometimes to navigate the system, and you are the beacon to help the Soldiers achieve their best health.”

Various NCMs from different clinics/medical homes put up displays and held open houses to educate beneficiaries on the wide variety of services they provide.

Nurse case managers help develop medical care and recovery plans for their patients. All clinics/Soldier and Patient Centered Medical Homes, Soldier Readiness Processing Sites, Warrior Transition Units and Embedded Behavioral Health Clinics have an assigned nurse case

Manager and the services provided can vary, depending on the needs of the patient they're serving. In the clinics and medical homes, the nurse case manager typically helps a Soldier healing from a condition, illness or injury that is being treated at that clinic.

“Using a patient centered approach, we help to plan the care for the patient by actively engaging the care teams, facilitating communication, educating Service Members and their Families, and advocating for more positive outcomes, while also empowering and encouraging them,” explained Angela Powell-

Lewis, nurse case manager at CRDAMC's Bennett Army Medical Home. "By elevating the care delivery, improving readiness, enhancing access to care, and achieving optimal outcomes we help ensure a uniform patient experience for all beneficiaries."

While their role is primarily management, advocacy is an important part of their job, according to Powell-Lewis. Nurse case managers strive to empower and encourage their patients to manage and coordinate their own care.

Not every patient needs a case manager. Case management assignment is determined on a case by case basis, after an initial assessment.

"Patients may be referred by any medical provider," Powell-Lewis said. "Anyone can self-refer to have the initial assessment and determination. Patients should contact their primary care manager if interested in being self-referred."

Maj. Christina Steimle, chief, Nurse Case Management and Patient Services, said this week's activities were also meant to "take care of the care-giver."

"There are so many NCMs throughout the system and everyone is so busy that we don't get the time to meet with each other, share stories and learn from each other. It's important to set the time for networking events with NCMs from all the different clinics/homes and even our community partners," Steimle said. "The team also took the time this week for some much needed recognition and social time to boost morale."