

inside gcm

INSIDE

Our National
Association History

Care Managers as
Challengers: Adapting
to a Changing
Economic Landscape

Voices of NAPGCM Past
Presidents

A look back...
*...and a look
forward*



National Association of
Professional Geriatric Care Managers

To advance professional geriatric care management through education, collaboration, and leadership.

An Interview with

Amelia Crotwell, Esq.

by Jennifer E. Voorlas

Elder Law of East Tennessee (ELET) uses a unique approach to Elder Law called Life Care Planning. Elder Law of East Tennessee Attorney Amelia Crotwell and Elder Care Coordinator Connie Taylor, LCSW, NCG work as a team to address legal issues while designing a comprehensive long-term care plan that maximizes quality of life and independence for the older adult.

What was the determining factor in your decision to hire a GCM in your practice?

Two things prompted that decision – Clients were constantly asking me questions that I could not answer about how to fill their practical needs involved in aging. Which nursing home should mom be in? How do we best handle dad's refusal to stop driving? Often, I was stymied. There was so much to learn about serving the needs of seniors that I didn't have the time or the contacts to develop on my own. So I started thinking about working with a GCM.

A second factor was a desire to direct my practice into a new area. To leave behind the general civil trial practice that I had built, with all the limitations of using the court room as a problem solving tool, and transition into something collaborative, innovative, and generally non-confrontational.

How has hiring a GCM in your law practice enhanced the lives of your clients?

There are so many ways ... our primary goal is to improve quality of life for our senior clients and a byproduct of that is better quality of life for the adult child caregiver. Connie assists with identifying and resolving safety concerns and helps



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clients in the prevention of the four big risk factors – falls, medication mistakes, isolation and depression, and dehydration and malnourishment. She has the ability to make referrals to resources in the community, to listen and guide, to help with access to care, to advise on benefits, such as Medicare, Medicaid, and to interface with care providers about billing. She becomes the first point of contact for all non-administrative issues – even legal issues. That doesn't mean she

gives legal advice, but she is the ear of ELET. She listens, reassures, and then forwards questions she cannot answer to me.

The client has an accessible, knowledgeable, and caring person to call when things seem overwhelming, or when something happens that they don't understand. She also receives the calls when clients have accomplished something wonderful or had a meaningful improvement of health or cognitive function, due to her recommendations. The caregiver also benefits, the caregiver gets a sense of relief. The burdens of going it alone in the world of senior caregiving fall away and knowledge, confidence, and efficiency take its place. Connie also helps clients or family members manage their expectations by giving input on what is realistic and what may not be realistic. She is a tremendous advocate with care providers.

Maybe we have a client who has decompensated and is in a psych ward, the family is confused and scared, Connie steps in and works directly with the social worker at the hospital. The social worker is so relieved that we're involved, the family is relieved to understand what is happening to their loved one, and the client is getting the treatment needed to improve. So, perhaps what I'm trying to say is that she blends solid, practical real world advice with her professional training and experience to help clients and families get the best care possible and prevent or solve challenges efficiently.

How does the GCM enhance your law practice?

I have a consummate, warm professional as a representative. She also is one face of ELET in the community. She makes me look good within the senior community, which is where the majority of our business comes from. When other lawyers find out I have a social worker on staff, they understand immediately that we are a non-traditional law office, and it always prompts discussion to learn more about what we do. She has been one of the fundamental factors in the success of the firm since its inception. I could not do this Life Care Planning practice without her.

What roles in your practice does the GCM play?

- Relationship building – she handles all the intake calls from prospective clients, so she starts developing a relationship with clients before I ever meet them. She becomes the primary point of contact for all clients and prospective clients.
- Care assessments – she meets the client in his care setting and provides her professional opinion of the issues and potential hurdles, the needs, the desires of the family, and this continues over time with the relationship with the client.
- Care coordination – helping clients find the right care in the right setting at the right price.
- Collaborative problem-solving – I love having someone I respect and trust to talk with about a client's issues and to seek real, practical answers outside the courtroom. Connie shines in this role.
- Advocacy – she coordinates with facility administrators, doctors, social workers, and other care professionals to be sure that the care the client receives is the best possible care.
- Care Transitions and Placement – she works with discharge planners, admissions personnel, and families to find the appropriate setting for the client.
- Medicaid or public benefits – she attends the appointments with the Department of Human Services or Veterans Affairs with our caregivers to ease stress of the unknown of that meeting, to provide information, and to ferret out and prevent problems with applications before they get past the case worker's desk; her knowledge and professionalism

develops credibility for the firm in that often complicated setting.

- Education – she educates the caregiver child about being a good caregiver and a good advocate.
- Communication – Connie shields the attorney and the paralegal so we can be more productive— often by the time the client's questions, concerns, or problems arrive at my desk, Connie has comforted the client, reassured the family, managed

Without a GCM, I would be confined to a traditional law practice selling commodities – that is, selling a last will or a power of attorney or a deed or representation in a court case. With a GCM I get to have a long-term relationship with the client and family... With no GCM, I would merely be dabbling at providing elder services beyond the focus of that purely legal.

expectations, and simplified the questions for me; that frees me up to focus on the legal work that I love and minimizes the interruptions or “drama” that can really impact productivity in the office.

- Marketing — Connie schedules speaking engagements and “meet and greet” appointments for me so that I can also generate a public face for the firm. Because of her contacts, I have access to Alzheimer's and MS support groups, senior centers, professional social worker groups, community college teaching opportunities, financial planners, assisted living and nursing home administrators, and community organizations and churches. I am constantly being sought as a public speaker and Connie lends me this visibility.
- Blogging – Elder law Insights is Connie's blog where she shares her thoughts and experiences as a

resource for clients and the public and as marketing tool to drive interest to our website.

What services do you offer for the older adult and their family that you might not offer without the GCM ?

Without a GCM, I would be confined to a traditional law practice selling commodities – that is, selling a last will or a power of attorney or a deed or representation in a court case. With a GCM I get to have a long-term relationship with the client and family. We do Life Care Planning, we offer care coordination alone, we offer GCM monitoring for clients who have no family nearby to provide that oversight, we offer placement assistance, we provide advocacy in the hospital, nursing home, assisted living, or with care providers in the home. With no GCM, I would merely be dabbling at providing elder services beyond the focus of that purely legal.

How would you advise a GCM to proceed in approaching an elder care firm to become part of their practice?

Do your research about how to be an asset and how you fit in. Look at the Life Care Planning Law Firms Association for information about Life Care Planning. Talk to care coordinators who are doing the work you want to do, even in another city or state. Find out how invaluable they are to the law office environment and get a firm grasp of how much business you can bring to the firm. Be prepared to talk about the myriad of contacts you have in the senior community and how you can open doors for the attorney to market the practice. Stress the benefit you can bring to the client with your experience and advice. Consider approaching an attorney that is in a small firm rather than a large one. Solo practitioners may be more flexible and perhaps more innovative. Consider being flexible and innovative in your compensation arrangements until the work starts pouring in.

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An Interview with Amelia Crotwell, Esq.

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Do you feel it is advantageous are for a care manager to work under the umbrella of a law practice rather than independently? Why?

Your nametag has the name of a law firm on it. When you're talking to a care provider about issues or problems in the care setting, or when you are asking for an accommodation, the care provider knows you have the backing of a law firm. If legal action is needed, it will be taken. The care provider knows that you have the legal knowledge about the rules governing their industry and the rights of the client. Second, it may keep you busier. Third, if you become salaried, you may make more money without the hassles of trying to run your own business.

What would you recommend as a marketing strategy for a GCM interested in becoming part of the law practice?

Think about what you can bring with you that will result in immediate income to the firm or immediate exposure for the attorney:

- Line up a few opportunities for public speaking for an attorney before you ever meet the attorney, and
- Have some referrals ready to bring with you –current clients who have unaddressed legal needs
- Prepare a list of contacts in the senior community and be prepared to discuss your relationship with these people and how those relationships will benefit the attorney
- Prepare a list of “things” you can do for the attorney to enhance the practice – perhaps even share this article or something like it with the attorney
- Create a blog on caring for seniors and discuss how that blog can be a marketing tool for the attorney
- Prepare creative ideas for how to better serve clients, educational seminars, blogging, newsletters, workshops
- Stress how you can bring in revenue by increasing business but that a lot of the work would be done by you

How does having a GCM onboard help families deal with advanced planning for their loved ones with dementia/Alzheimer's?

Okay, it's not exactly like having a crystal ball because the course of dementia or Alzheimer's is always different for every family, but there are patterns and progressions that the GCM can knowledgeably discuss with the family and that we can plan for. The benefit is a care plan that isn't about crisis management –it's about crisis prevention. For those who plan early, the GCM and attorney together, as a team, help prepare expectations, preserve resources, eliminate stress and worry for the caregiver, assure proper respite care, increase safety, and generally, help these families navigate emotional and practical challenges associated with this illness.



Bobbi Kolonay, Carol Heape, Mary Kay Krokowski

A Time to Share

by Amy Abrams

The Advanced Practice Retreat took place in San Diego from September 15-18, 2011, providing attendees with the chance to engage in thought-provoking discussions with colleagues from around the country, as well as invaluable networking opportunities. This year, the APR featured two structured discussions, *Minimizing the Effects of a Public Relations Crisis*, and an exploration of the opportunities for geriatric care managers in *Preventing Hospital Readmissions*. Expert panels led in-depth dialogues on both topics with a focus on how they impact our businesses and our industry. In addition, as at all APRs, there were many small group discussions on such diverse subjects as structuring employee compensation, insurance coverage, marketing strategies, and encouraging outside the box thinking in a care management practice. Attendees reported that they appreciated their colleagues willingness to share and discuss challenging topics.

The conference planning committee, Norman Hannay and Amy Abrams of Elder Care Guides and Colleen Van Horn with Innovative Healthcare Consultants, wish to thank the NAPGCM staff for their assistance in organizing and executing the event. Special thanks to sponsors

Barbara Bristow and Jan McCurdy of Senior Care Management for their generous support, and to all of the NAPGCM members who were able to attend.



(top) Event Sponsors Barbara Bristow and Jan McCurdy of Senior Care Management
(bottom) Planning Committee Colleen Van Horn, Amy Abrams, Norman Hannay