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National Association of
Professional Geriatric Care Managers

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



Marketing During the Holidays

Jennifer E. Voorlas

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Marketing during the holiday season can be an opportune time to spread good cheer as well as let other businesses know about your particular practice and skill set. Relationships we have established with clients and professionals have undoubtedly touched our lives and enhanced our practice. But how do we educate those who don't know about our services?

For many PGCMs, the holidays are considered a slow time for business: people are preoccupied with buying gifts, pleasing family members, eating, being financially stressed out, having fun... and even more eating! Don't write this off as a bad time to market. The holidays are a magical time when tenderness, openness, and a willingness to embrace new lifestyle changes are in the air. Connect with that magic! Insert hope and compassion into the

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lives of others that most need it. Keeping these principles in mind, the way we market is just as important as the content we provide. Utilize your talents to show this. Be creative!

Who is our Target Market?

Many professionals in the community work with families and hear about elder care issues first hand. An elder law attorney drafting up a will or an advanced directive for a client might learn there is a

problem with mom or dad living alone in the home. Perhaps there is an elder abuse issue. Mental health professionals such as Geriatric Psychiatrists have a direct vantage point into the problems of depression and can alert a PGCM if they are concerned about a patient's welfare. Neurologists see dementia and Alzheimer's patients everyday and may discuss concerns about independent living with their families. Doctors

integrate care managers into their practice; doing in-home assessments, care plans, and monitoring conditions to provide quality of care for their patients.

Senior centers, adult day care centers, senior housing, and home care agencies need your referrals as much as you need theirs. CPAs (Certified public accountants), physical therapists, chiropractors, long-term care insurance agents, hospitals/discharge planners, chiropractic offices, and even podiatrists can call upon your expertise. Let them know about YOU:

- Create a holiday theme on your Web site.
- Update your Web site by including new photos and sprucing up the appearance. Add any new services that you have incorporated.
- Join Groups: Local Chamber of Commerce, Optimists Club, Women in Business, local Home care Association, Women's groups for investing—they have great resources and networking events.
- Attend events sponsored by the Alzheimer's association.
- Reconnect with old colleagues to meet for lunch to re-establish that relationship.
- Write articles for local magazines or newspapers, i.e., Fighting the Holiday Blues, diet, stress, exercise, senior issues.
- Revamp brochures for the New Year and send them out to existing clients and prospective ones.
- Arrange a talk at a local senior center, for dealing with holidays and or care giving issues.
- Attend church holiday events/have your business cards ready!
- Send Holiday cards to existing clients and professionals you have a relationship with.
- Offer Holiday gift certificates for your services.
- Create year end business flyer with services for the New Year.
- Give out pens or notepads with business logo.

- Promote yourself at a durable medical equipment store.
- Host a decorating party and invite professionals in the community.
- Attend holiday events at senior centers, gyms, home health agencies, etc.
- Attend an open house at a law firm; don't forget to hand out your business card!

Ethical Marketing

It is important to think clearly about what type of relationship we have with each organization/client and what would be appropriate given that connection. For example, one might market differently to a prospective client or organization for new business/referrals, than they might to a client they have had for many years. There are ethical parameters that may vary from state to state. Some state regulations or professional codes now restrict business gifts (even pens or sticky pads!) so it is imperative that we be aware of these limits. Follow specific guidelines for business and marketing endeavors when relating to other potential clients/resource/referral streams. Also, be true to the ethics of your particular certification/licensure. Another great resource is the NAPGCM Web site which includes information on marketing and press releases. This is invaluable information that reminds us to adhere to our own code of ethics as well as gain creative inspiration (<http://www.caremanager.org>).

Marketing during the holidays can pave the way for a profitable new year. Because our NAPGCM practices are of great value, we want people who need us at the most critical times of their lives to have access to our services. By developing alliances with professionals who can be a part of the overall "care team," we can achieve that end. This is clearly a win-win situation for everyone.

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NAPGCM Partners with Federal Agency to Raise Awareness of Medicare Benefits

A PR Success Story for NAPGCM

Past President Linda Aufderhaar represented NAPGCM on September 18th at an invitation-only Washington, D.C. meeting of 30 of the aging industry's top experts to unveil a new government online initiative aimed at educating caregivers of seniors and people with disabilities.

NAPGCM was asked by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to partner in the organization's new "Ask Medicare" Web site (<http://www.medicare.gov/caregivers>) program, which features insight from caregiving professionals as well as representatives of the healthcare industry. The consumer-friendly Internet resource provides Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers with tools and materials designed to help them make informed healthcare decisions. In addition to NAPGCM, other partner organizations invited to attend the CMS "Ask Medicare" launch included AARP, Alzheimer's Association, National Alliance for Caregiving, National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), and other organizations.

"This truly is a one-stop site that will help lighten the burden on caregivers," said Aufderhaar. "It was inspiring to see so many organizations come together at the launch, all united by a mission to help protect our nation's most vulnerable citizens. This Web site will help put caregivers in touch with the experts and organizations that can help them address a myriad of challenges and concerns."

NAPGCM leaders say they are thrilled CMS chose them as a partner in the Web-based "Ask Medicare" program. "Medicare is the cornerstone of healthcare security for seniors and people with disabilities," said NAPGCM President Monika White, Ph.D. "We are pleased to support an effort that will help raise awareness of the programs and resources available to caregivers and Medicare beneficiaries."

Caremanager.org now features an "Ask Medicare" banner logo linking to the new site. In return, "Ask Medicare" pages will soon include links to Caremanager.org. Since other partners are doing the same cross-promotional efforts, Caremanager.org is poised to receive additional visitors as a result. This is an excellent example of how NAPGCM is increasing public awareness of the vital services our members provide.



NAPGCM's Linda Aufderhaar and CMS Acting Administrator Kerry Weems