

## Embracing and Making Changes in an Evolving Field

By **Debbie L. Cromwell**, CDMS, CPDM, CCMP  
Chair, CDMS Commission

**Over the past several years we have witnessed significant changes in the practice of disability management: an integrated approach to occupational and non-occupational illnesses, injuries, and disabilities; an increased focus on employee health, wellness, and prevention; and more employer-driven initiatives to improve workforce management.** At the CDMS Commission we have responded to these changes in order to ensure that our Certified Disability Management Specialist (CDMS) credential remains highly relevant and valued by certificants and employers. Now the CDMS Commission is instituting some changes of our own through two major projects that are highlighted in this newsletter.

First, we are pleased to announce a new designation—the Associate Disability Management Specialist. As you will read (see CDMS Unveils Associate Disability Management Specialist Designation, page 3), the ADMS designation has been created in response to demand from the field and allows the Commission to embrace a broader population of practitioners.

Second, we have launched the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum. This unique, comprehensive online learning program offers in-depth education, interactive exercises, and best practices drawn from across all four domains of disability management (see CDMS Launches Core Knowledge Curriculum, page 2).

The ADMS designation and the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum represent tremendous undertakings on the part of the Commission. Developing and launching the ADMS designation required a significant commitment of time and effort on the part of Commissioners and Commission staff.

The Core Knowledge Curriculum reflects countless hours devoted by subject matter experts, the Commission's Core Knowledge

Committee, and Commission staff. Thanks to their dedication, the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum has received highly positive feedback from its beta users. We invite you to go to the newly redesigned Commission web site at [www.CDMS.org](http://www.CDMS.org) for more information about the core curriculum.

I want to emphasize the many ways that the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum may be used. In addition to serving as a pathway for those pursuing the ADMS designation, the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum may be used as supplemental preparation for those pursuing CDMS certification.

For those of us who are already certified, the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum is a helpful online tool to further our education in the field—particularly in emerging areas. Since all of us need continuing education credits in order to renew our certification every five years, the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum is an important source of continuing education (CE) hours, offering eight CE hours for each of four domain modules for a total of up to 32 CE hours.

Continuing education should be more than a “check the box” activity for certificants



*Debbie L. Cromwell, CDMS, CPDM, CCMP, is Chair of the CDMS Commission, and also a Principal with Integrated Impact Management, which offers absence management, integrated disability management, and related services.*



## Changes in an Evolving Field

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who need to fulfill CE requirements for certification renewal. It is an important component of professional development, and should be pursued purposefully to further your knowledge as a certified disability management specialist. Your commitment to staying abreast of emerging trends and deepening your knowledge of best practices is a sign of relevancy—not complacency.

As an independent commission, we believe we are in a unique position to offer educational resources, without any commercial bias. Our intention is to offer learning opportunities in an online environment to meet the needs of certificants and other professionals in the field.

The Commission looks forward to further developments as we seek to be a channel between the field and those who seek to distinguish their competence, knowledge, and experience. We know that many professions are coming together under the umbrella of the CDMS, not only from our traditional roots in rehabilitation counseling and nursing, which remain strongholds for the certification, but also safety, risk management, and human resources. We view this spectrum as rich and vibrant, and we take seriously our obligation to offer resources, especially online and through our web site, to build and support the community, including through social networking.

We look forward to hearing from you—your thoughts, opinions, questions, and comments. You may contact the Commission at [info@CDMS.org](mailto:info@CDMS.org). Your feedback is important to us as we strive to better serve the active and growing community of disability management specialists.

## CDMS Launches Core Knowledge Curriculum

The CDMS Commission is proud to introduce the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum, a unique online learning program for those in the field of disability management or those who may be charged with administering programs related to disability or leaves of absence.

The Commission has developed the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum in response to increased need for educational resources in disability management. This comprehensive new offering was designed around the job analysis conducted by the Commission in 2009. For the first time, comprehensive knowledge, skills, interactive exercises, and case study examples can be accessed in one place via an online resource.

The curriculum will also be used as the pathway for achieving the new Associate Disability Management Specialist (ADMS) designation (see article, page 3). After successfully completing all five modules in the core knowledge curriculum, those wishing to attain the ADMS designation will answer a series of questions related to the material. A cumulative passing rate of 80% has been set for the ADMS exam.

In addition, although the Commission does not endorse any particular study materials or preparation courses, those preparing for the CDMS certification examination may also find the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum helpful as supplemental material to deepen their understanding across the breadth of disability management practice.

For those who are already certified, the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum may be used to earn up to 32 continuing education (CE) hours when they participate in the full curriculum learning program. Curriculum modules are available separately or as a package to enable existing certificants to customize their learning. Since the CDMS Commission now has a new Domain IV around Employment Leaves and Benefits Administration, current certificants may find this module of particular interest.

The CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum is organized into an introductory module and four domain modules, each reflecting an area of practice identified in the Role & Function study. They include:

**Introductory Module:** Introduction to Core Competencies

**Module 1:** Domain for Disability and Work Interruption Case Management (8 CEs)

**Module 2:** Domain for Workplace Intervention for Disability Prevention (8 CEs)

**Module 3:** Domain for Program Development, Management, and Evaluation (8 CEs)

**Module 4:** Domain for Employment Leaves and Benefits Administration (8 CEs)

The CDMS Commission is currently offering introductory Beta-test pricing that gives participants a 50% discount. For more information about the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum, including introductory pricing and group discounts available through February 2011, please visit the Commission web site at [www.CDMS.org](http://www.CDMS.org), and download the Core Knowledge Curriculum Fact Sheet.

## CDMS Unveils Associate Disability Management Specialist Designation

By **Edwin W. Quick**, MA, MBA, CRC, CCM, CDMS, GPHR  
Chair-Elect



*Edwin W. Quick, MA, MBA, CRC, CCM, CDMS, GPHR, is chair-elect of CDMS Commission and a vice president of disability management services for a Fortune 500 company.*

Over the past several years, both private and public employers and organizations have driven a significant change in the professional make up of those who practice or are responsible for disability management programs and services.

Many come to the field from a variety of backgrounds, gathering experience as they move into these positions. In recognition of this growing trend and population of practitioners who are already in disability management, but who do not possess the traditional educational and practice background required to become a Certified Disability Management Specialist, the CDMS Commission has created a new designation: the Associate Disability Management Specialist (ADMS).

The pathway for achieving the ADMS is through the new CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum (see CDMS Launches Core Knowledge Curriculum, page 2). This new online learning resource is based on the findings of the most recent CDMS Commission Role & Function Study that identify the practice areas or domains relevant to disability management today.

Applicants for the ADMS must successfully complete all five modules of the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum and achieve a minimum passing score of 80% on examination questions at the conclusion of the domain modules of the Core Knowledge Curriculum. The Commission anticipates making the ADMS designation available starting in early 2011.

The Commission set a high bar for the passing rate in order to continue our practice of rigorous competency measurement. Therefore, whether one's name and title includes the CDMS certification or the ADMS designation, it carries the assurance of being held to a set standard of knowledge and skills. Additionally, those who achieve the ADMS will be required to pursue continuing education and must adhere to a professional code of ethics similar to the requirements for those who hold the CDMS certification.

The Commission believes the new offering is both positive for the field and beneficial

to the public. After all, a certification or designation is meant to protect those who receive services from a practitioner. By offering this new designation and the CDMS certification, the Commission is able to extend its umbrella to identify a broader group of professionals from which individuals or organizations can select for service. The Commission would also encourage those who achieve the ADMS designation to pursue continuing education that would enable them to sit for the CDMS certification examination.

The Commission has always focused on how practitioners interface with employers, both large and small. Over the past several years in particular, the practice of disability management has become increasingly employer-driven. The initial reaction of employers to ADMS has been favorable because the designation embraces non-

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traditional practitioners who have become responsible for disability management in the workplace.

Given the utmost importance placed on the accreditation of the CDMS credential, the Commission reached out to the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), which is the parent

organization to the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). Based on the feedback, the CDMS Commission is confident that the offering of the ADMS designation would complement our CDMS certification.

Launching a new designation represents an exciting time for the Commission and reflects our deep commitment to the field of disability management. We encourage your feedback and questions as we share this information with those who practice in the disability field, and welcome those who are already practicing and wish to become part of a well-established organization through the new ADMS designation.



*Celeste Morgan M.Ed.,  
CDMS, CSSR, CIR  
Recruitment Consultant,  
Human Resources  
Mid-Columbia Medical  
Center  
The Dalles, OR*

## CDMS Spotlight: Celeste Morgan

Celeste Morgan has experienced first-hand what is being witnessed across disability management: a broadening of the field to include people from a variety of disciplines. With a background in vocational rehabilitation counseling, Celeste later gravitated toward human resources, which she viewed as a natural transition. “What I loved about vocational rehabilitation counseling was helping people find work and grow in their careers. Working in HR, I have retained that focus.”

Today, Celeste is a recruitment consultant for Mid-Columbia Medical Center in The Dalles, Ore. Although she earned her CDMS in 2007 when she was practicing as a private vocational rehabilitation counselor, Celeste says the credential is extremely helpful in her human resources position. “The CDMS certification is still helping me in my HR role, in areas such as assessing a person’s ability to perform on-the-job, career placements or updating job descriptions,” she explained.

Celeste sees a natural link between disability management and human resources. The two disciplines overlap in many workplace issues, such as the need to understand the legal issues surrounding Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and establishing

transition plans for employees who are returning to work. More broadly, she sees a multi-disciplinary approach being taken increasingly in workplace programs involving other departments as well such as risk, safety, and occupational health.

Not only is Celeste a CDMS certificant, she is also a Commissioner with the CDMS Commission, a volunteer role she has found to be both personally rewarding and beneficial to her career. For example, serving on the CDMS Commission’s Exam and Research Committee has furthered her understanding of the examination process, which has helped her as she develops pre-employment ability tests for her employer. In addition, she views her Commissioner role as a way to give back to the field that has embraced her.

Highlighting the importance of continuing education to all professionals in the field, regardless of job title or where and how they practice, Celeste is now pursuing an advanced degree. She expects to earn her doctorate in industrial and organizational psychology from Capella University in 2012. “I always want to learn more,” she added. “My goal is to tailor my studies to further my understanding of career planning and recruitment.”

## CDMS Web Site Premieres New Design, Improved Navigation, and More Robust Content

The CDMS Commission’s redesigned web site has been launched, with a new look and feel and improved navigation.

The web site ([www.CDMS.org](http://www.CDMS.org)) carries out the theme of the Commission’s new logo with a color spectrum that reflects the breadth of the practice today. The site features highlighted sections for our community of certificants, employers, and partners. In addition, the web site is built around the principles for which CDMS certification stands—competence, collaboration, and assurance—with unique resources and other helpful information in each area.

Interactive and highly relevant to practitioners in the field, the web site includes alerts and news updates related to disability management, health and wellness, productivity, workplace practices, and other topics. Plus, visitors to the site will find links to our social media outreach such as the CDMS Group on LinkedIn.

The new CDMS site is your link to the disability management community. Bookmark it as one of your favorites or make it your home page. See you online!

The screenshot shows the CDMS Commission website with a new design. The header includes the CDMS logo, the text "Certification of Disability Management Specialists COMMISSION", and a search bar. The main content area features a "CDMS News" section with two articles: "Announcing Beta-Testing for the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum" and "2010 Quality Leadership Award Awarded". A sidebar on the left contains a navigation menu with items like Home, About CDMS Commission, CDMS Certification, CE Providers, News, Industry News, Competency, Collaboration, Assurance, Find a CDMS, FAc, General Information, Computer Based Testing (CBT), and Application Information. At the bottom, there is a "Press Release Archive" link and a footer with contact information and a copyright notice.

## CDMS Brand-New Identity Wins Design Awards

In 2009, the CDMS Commission embarked on a bold endeavor to refresh its brand and reposition the CDMS certification in the marketplace. Like the practice of disability management, the logo reflects the new continuum from disability to ability, from absence to return-to-work.



During the transition, many of you told us how the new CDMS looks more vital and feels more inclusive. Your feedback has been very encouraging and affirming. Yet, it's also nice to hear from design experts that our logo and marketing design deserve some extra attention.

PROCEED by Design, the Commission's branding and marketing firm, was recognized for design excellence in two contests this year. From a field of 8,000 entries, the CDMS brand-new identity system was selected as one of the winners in the American Graphic Design Awards, sponsored by Graphic Design USA. The CDMSource newsletter received The Communicator Award of Distinction honoring creative excellence for communications professionals from the International Academy of the Visual Arts.

Stay on the lookout for more CDMS branding as we update all of our certification materials and roll out the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum.

### 2011-12 Exam Schedule

#### Exam Windows

February 4-12, 2011  
June 3-11, 2011  
September 9-17, 2011  
February 3-11, 2012

### 2010 Exam Results

#### February 2010 exam:

Eligible candidates who sat for exam 78  
Candidates who achieved passing scores 57

#### June 2010 exam:

Eligible candidates who sat for exam 65  
Candidates who achieved passing scores 46

#### September 2010 exam:

Eligible candidates who sat for exam 75  
Candidates who achieved passing scores 49

## CDMS Certification Examination to Test for Knowledge of Domain IV

Starting with the February 4-12, 2011 examination cycle, potential certificants who are qualified to sit for the CDMS certification exam will be tested on their knowledge of the newest domain of disability management: Domain IV - Employment Leaves and Benefits Administration. This domain was identified in the Commission's 2009 Role & Function Study of current disability management practice.

With the inclusion of Domain IV, the certification examination will test for knowledge in all four domains of current disability management practice:

**Domain I: Disability and Work Interruption Case Management**

**Domain II: Workplace Intervention for Disability Prevention**

**Domain III: Program Development, Management, and Evaluation**

**Domain IV: Employment Leaves and Benefits Administration.**

Tasks associated with Domain IV include: managing employment health-related leaves in accordance with local, state, and federal requirements; administering health and welfare plans consistent with government regulations and corporate requirements; managing payroll and systems data relevant to employment leaves and benefits by maintaining accurate records to comply with legal and regulatory requirements; and identifying risks associated with health-related work interruptions and employment leaves. For more information on any of the domains see "CDMS Eligibility Criteria & Practice Areas," on the CDMS website.

For more information on the certification examination, eligibility criteria, the testing schedule or the Core Knowledge Curriculum, please see the Commission web site at [www.CDMS.org](http://www.CDMS.org), or send an email to [info@CDMS.org](mailto:info@CDMS.org).



**NEW**  
**White Paper**  
**Available on**  
**the CDMS**  
**Commission**  
**Web Site**

## **White Paper:** **Multigenerational Workforce Presents Challenges,** **Opportunities for Disability Management**

The workplace is multigenerational, with people in their sixties and seventies working alongside those who are in their twenties or even their teens. Such a mix of ages and experiences further enhances the rich tapestry of the diverse workplace.

The disability manager, however, must understand how having four or five demographic groups in the workplace impacts programs such as return-to-work, health and wellness, prevention, and safety. In a new white paper entitled “Disability Management: Addressing the Multigenerational Workforce,” CDMS Commission explores the challenges and opportunities presented by the workplace today. The white paper features experts from Aetna and MetLife, employers including E.ON U.S. and OhioHealth, and thought leaders in disability management.

“Although much has been written on the aging of the workforce, given the large Baby Boomer demographic, there are few resources that specifically address disability

management in a multigenerational workforce,” Debbie Cromwell, CDMS, CPDM, CCMP, Chair of the CDMS Commission said. “We believe this white paper will contribute meaningfully to a very important discussion about workplace programs and interventions.”

Understanding the characteristics of each demographic group is essential as disability managers and employers design and implement effective interventions to support and improve employee health and productivity. Most important, as the paper observes, is maintaining an individualized approach, which is a cornerstone of disability management. Although generational commonalities may exist, disability managers need to focus first on the individual and his/her specific needs and preferences.

The white paper is available for free under the “Competency” tab on the CDMS Commission web site at [www.CDMS.org](http://www.CDMS.org).

## **Maximizing Your CE Power!**

Continuing education is an important investment in your career, but it can be expensive. There are many ways you can earn continuing education (CE) credit by capitalizing your professional development and activities such as writing articles and books or book chapters.

As a reminder, CDMS certificants are required to earn 80 hours of CE credit every five years for recertification. A minimum of 4 hours must be in ethics. A maximum of 40 hours can be in professional development.

To reduce the cost and paperwork involved, pursue pre-approved CE. Start with the CDMS Commission’s List of Continuing Education providers with Pre-Approved Programs, available on the CDMS website. Focus on CE opportunities that offer the most CE hours.

### **HERE ARE SEVERAL CE OPTIONS:**

- Read the CDMS Code of Professional Conduct and answer the CE questions to earn 2 CE hours in ethics. Certificants may utilize this option each time the Code is revised.
- Take or audit a college-level course (15 CE hours for 1 semester credit, or 10 CE hours for 1 quarter credit)
- Attend a conference, workshop, or seminar (1 CE hour for each hour of training)
- Attend in-service training offered by your employer (1 CE Hour for each hour of training)
- Develop a presentation or in-service training program within one of the domain areas of disability management. (2 CE hours for each hour of training)

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## CDMS Commissioners 2010–2011

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Principal  
Integrated Impact Management  
Hendersonville, NC

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Denial Resource Center Coordinator  
Baylor Health Care System  
Dallas, TX

**Mary Jesko** Ed.D., MS, CDMS, CMC, CRC, CLCP  
Principal/Medical & Disability Case  
Manager  
Medical Management Nurse Consultants  
Jesko and Associates Inc.  
San Diego, CA

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Assistant Professor,  
Professional and Rehabilitation  
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Central Connecticut State University  
Rehabilitation Consultant  
New Britain, CT

**Celeste Morgan** M.Ed., CDMS, CSSR, CIR  
Recruitment Consultant, Human  
Resources  
Mid-Columbia Medical Center  
The Dalles, OR

**Raymond "DT" North** MSOD, CDMS, ABVE-D  
President  
Achieve Consulting Team, Inc.  
Olympia, WA

**Stan Scioscia** M.Ed., CRC, CDMS, CPDM  
Account Manager, Life, Absence and  
Disability Management  
Aetna Group Insurance  
San Francisco, CA

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The CDMS Commission  
invites you to forward  
this issue of CDMSource  
to anyone who is  
interested in disability  
management.



## 2011 QLA Award Application to be Available in January 2011

Each year the Commission presents its Quality Leadership Award to an organization that demonstrates excellence and leadership in disability management. The application for the 2011 award will be available early next year. Mark your calendar to check the CDMS web site after January 15, 2011 for more information on the award and the application.

## Maximizing Your CE Power

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### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CE OPTIONS:

- Serve on the board or committee of a disability management-related organization (1 CE hour for each hour of service provided)
- Author or co-author:
  - A published book (40 CE hours)
  - A published book chapter (15 CE hours)
  - A published, peer-reviewed article (15 CE hours)
- Produce an editorial review of a recognized disability management or health and productivity-related publication (15 CE hours per review)

For more information on continuing education and recertification, please contact the CDMS Commission at [info@CDMS.org](mailto:info@CDMS.org).



The CDMS Commission is the only independent and nationally accredited organization that certifies disability management specialists. Through sound testing backed by scientific research, continuing education, and a strict code of ethics, the Commission validates the core knowledge and competency of these experts.

### How to reach us:

The CDMS Commission welcomes your feedback and encourages you to contact us with your ideas. We prefer to receive letters via e-mail without attachments at: [info@CDMS.org](mailto:info@CDMS.org)

### CDMS Commission

1699 E. Woodfield Road, Suite 300  
Schaumburg, IL 60173-4957

847.944.1335 MAIN  
847.944.1346 FAX  
[www.CDMS.org](http://www.CDMS.org)