Strategic Visioning of the Future of Disability Management

By Edwin W. Quick, MA, MBA, CRC, CCM, CDMS, GPHR
Chair, CDMS Commission

What will the field of disability management look like in the years ahead? How should the CDMS Commission position itself to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse community of professionals? These questions are at the heart of a strategic visioning process that the Commission recently embarked upon, as we contemplate the changes that have already come to pass and what the future holds. We have started the process with open minds and a great deal of enthusiasm. It promises to be an exciting endeavor!

For the moment, let’s take a look at some of the factors that are impacting the field today. One is the aging of the workforce, which we addressed in our recent white paper: Disability Management: Addressing the Multigenerational Workforce (see www.CDMS.org/whitepapers.php).

With more mature workers staying on past the traditional retirement age, the demographics of people to whom we provide services are changing. Disability managers are addressing the return-to-work and stay-at-work needs of older workers who may be aging out of their jobs but have valuable skills and experience to contribute to the workforce.

SUCCESSION PLANNING
In addition, many disability managers, themselves, are baby boomers. As the field matures, we must ask ourselves: who will eventually replace us in the years ahead when we retire? From which professions will the next generation of disability managers be drawn? These questions highlight the importance of a succession plan to ensure that young professionals know about disability management and recognize that there are many pathways into the field.

When I started my career, I was a vocational rehabilitation counselor. For me, the transition to disability management was a natural and logical progression. As my career expanded, I took on many roles and responsibilities around return-to-work and stay-at-work, program design and implementation, and workforce initiatives. As I expanded my knowledge and expertise, I continued my education, earning an MBA that has enabled me to speak the language of the “C-suite” to make the business case for integrated disability and absence management programs.

Today, as I consider the people I encounter not only in my “day job” but also as chair of the CDMS Commission, I see greater diversity in professional backgrounds. In addition to vocational rehabilitation and occupational health, human resources, benefits administration, safety, and other disciplines are coming together in disability management.

PROFESSIONAL DIVERSITY
Although these changes are exciting, they are not without challenges. For one, the field that we have always thought of as “specialized” is becoming broader.
Strategic Visioning of the Future
Continued from previous page

With people coming to disability management from so many different disciplines we have to expand our embrace of professional diversity, while continuing to elevate awareness of the contribution of Certified Disability Management Specialists. We continue to educate employers about the importance of integrated disability and absence management to employee health and productivity.

EDUCATION KEY TO OUTREACH
Education is clearly a key part of the Commission’s outreach strategy. As you’ll read in Chris Moranda’s column (see Page 3), the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum has been enthusiastically welcomed by employers and disability managers alike as a comprehensive online resource for disability management education. The Commission is also pleased by the number of people who have used the Core Knowledge Curriculum to obtain the Associate Disability Management Specialist (ADMS) designation by achieving a passing grade on the post-tests after the curriculum learning modules are concluded.

The Commission will continue to support the field by increasing employer awareness and by offering resources to supplement the knowledge, skills, and expertise of disability managers. Each of us, as Certified Disability Management Specialists, can extend the Commission’s efforts within our own networks. As seasoned professionals, we must share our expertise and knowledge with those who are new to the field. With many more paths to integrated disability and absence management, those of us who are currently in the field are invaluable guides for those who will follow.

Announcing New Alliance:
CDMS Enters into Memorandum of Understanding with USBLN®

The CDMS Commission is pleased to announce it has entered into a memorandum of understanding to establish an alliance with the US Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®), to further the mission and goals of both organizations.

USBLN® is the national disability organization that serves as the collective voice of more than sixty Business Leadership Network (BLN) affiliates across North America, representing more than 5,000 employers. The organization helps build workplaces, marketplaces, and supply chains where people with disabilities are respected for their talents, while supporting the development and expansion of its BLN affiliates.

Business Leadership Network

The CDMS Commission believes the alliance with USBLN® and its impressive network of member companies will further the Commission’s efforts to educate employers about the benefits of integrated disability management and the importance of certification.

As part of the alliance agreement, the CDMS Commission will contribute to the planning of the USBLN® annual conference, and will present at the event each year on the topic of certification. CDMS certificants and ADMS designees who attend the USBLN® annual conference will be eligible to receive continuing education (CE) units.

In addition, cooperation between the two organizations will allow the CDMS Commission to present this year’s Quality Leadership Award.

The CDMS Commission looks forward to fruitful cooperation with USBLN®. “This alliance aligns with our strategy to educate employers about the importance of managing disability and absence for the benefit of employee health and productivity,” emphasized Edwin Quick, the CDMS Commission chair. The alliance is an important milestone in the Commission’s outreach to employers.
Building Knowledge in an Expanding Field

By Chris Moranda, MA, LSW, CDMS, CCM

About nine months ago, the CDMS Commission launched a comprehensive online educational resource that was a first in the disability management field: the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum (CKC). Since then, the CKC has received a tremendous positive response, including strong enrollment and enthusiastic endorsements from enrollees, their employers, and academics in the field. For those who have used the curriculum as part of their preparation for the CDMS certification examination, an impressive passing rate shows the relevancy of the material (see sidebar on page 7).

Most important, the CKC provides a foundation of knowledge and best practices that is applicable across the diverse professional disciplines that come together under the umbrella of disability management. Today, in addition to the traditional backgrounds of vocational rehabilitation and occupational health/nursing, disability managers also come from human resources (HR) and related fields. As their job responsibilities have expanded from HR offices to occupational health operations to return-to-work functions, the spectrum of disability management has never been broader. And yet the common ground remains helping people with illnesses, injuries, and/or disabilities to resume working and remain productive.

As outlined in previous newsletters, disability management today consists of four practice areas or domains. They are: disability and work interruption case management; workplace intervention for disability prevention; program development, management, and evaluation; and employment leaves and benefits administration. Each of these domains is addressed in a separate module of the CKC, along with an introductory module. The four domain modules each carry 4 continuing education (CE) units, for a total of 32 units that may be earned for completing the entire course.

MULTI-PURPOSED CURRICULUM

For those who are eligible to sit for the CDMS certification examination, the CKC is an invaluable resource, providing insight into all knowledge areas and nuances of disability management today. The curriculum, however, is not designed for only examination preparation per se. Rather, it is a comprehensive resource that may be used in a variety of ways, including for continuing education or to gain in-depth knowledge in a certain aspect of the field.

When I became a Certified Disability Management Specialist 17 years ago, I relied largely on what I had learned on the job, along with supplemental learning on topics related to medical aspects of disability and transitional work. Over the
Building Knowledge
Continued from page 3

years, my job and responsibilities have expanded—just as the field, itself, has broadened. Although I am already certified, supplementing my knowledge in emerging areas of disability management—such as Domain IV, employment leaves and benefits administration—keeps me current in the field. Here, too, the CKC has proved to be a valuable resource, providing a refresher course on certain aspects of disability management and delivering new knowledge in emerging aspects of the practice.

NEW ADMS DESIGNATION ADDED

There is yet another application for the CKC, which is especially appealing to those who have been practicing in the field for many years but who are ineligible to sit for the CDMS certification examination. Now, by successfully completing the CKC and achieving a passing score on the post test at the end of each module, these professionals may earn the Associate Disability Management Specialist (ADMS) designation.

By achieving the ADMS, these professionals are able to validate the knowledge and experience they have acquired through professional experience and on-the-job education. Through the ADMS designation, they are able to showcase their competence and professionalism.

No matter where we are in our career development—whether we have been practicing disability management for years or we are new to the field because of additional responsibilities—we must commit to being lifelong learners. As the field continues to morph and expand, we must grow along with it, adding knowledge and experience in order to meet the needs of employees and employers.
CDMS Commission Welcomes Five Commissioners

Five new Commissioners have joined the CDMS Commission, bringing the total number of volunteer Commissioners serving on the board to fourteen. These professionals bring a wide range of knowledge and expertise – from less than two years to more than 30 years of disability-related experience – to their positions. They represent practitioners, disability management consultants, national service providers, and insurers. Their practice areas extend from the east coast to the west coast and all points in between. We thank them for their enthusiasm and their willingness to serve.

We asked each of the new Commissioners to consider the following question:

What do you see as exciting, challenging, or innovative about disability management, wellness, prevention, and/or health and productivity?

Patrick J. Beecher, MD, MPH, MBA, FACOEM
President, The Beecher Advisory Group
Experience: 25+ years

“Disability management is the means by which I can help a person make a difference in his/her life and for the future of his/her family. Today that means more effectively bringing together all resources such as family, employer, social network and medical community in a coordinated, patient-focused team effort. The future of disability management, given the aging of the population, should ideally include people in their retirement years as they represent an untapped, vital resource whose intellectual capital should be effectively leveraged to address today’s complex issues.”

John Czarick, M.Ed., CDMS, ABVE, ABDA, CRP
Vocational Expert/ Disability Manager
Experience: 30+ years

“A disability management specialist in the future will continue to be challenged in their ability to provide support to employers for their injured workers in return to light duty work programs in a cost effective manner. This will require disability management specialists to develop innovative solutions that are applicable in a variety of diverse situations as a means of helping employers bridge the gap for their employees.”

Alicia J. Heine, MA, CDMS, CRC, CCM
National Director – Vocational and Disability Services, Ability Services Network
Experience: 24 years

“The working population and the work environment are constantly changing. Utilizing all of the components of disability management to respond to these changing needs, to value the human capital which is our workforce, and meet the needs of the workplace is very challenging. I am passionate about the expansion of disability management to include initiatives such as wellness, prevention, and health and productivity, and coupling these programs with early intervention and return to work. Keeping employees healthy and, when an illness or an injury does occur, providing resources and support to both the employee and the employer to get the individual back to work as quickly as possible is a positive outcome for all.”

Larry W. Featherston, PhD, CRC, CVE
Rehabilitation Specialist, CIGNA Group Insurance
Experience: 1.5 years

“With nearly 54 million Americans suffering from either an acute or chronic disability, I believe that disability management services will play a key role in helping employers obtain and retain a talented and productive workforce. Not only

Please turn to page 6
CDMS Community Growing on LinkedIn.com

The CDMS Commission has launched a community on LinkedIn.com, the premier web site for business networking. In the first few months, the group has grown to include those who hold the Certified Disability Management Specialist (CDMS) certification, prospective certificants, those who have earned the new Associate Disability Management Specialist (ADMS) designation, and those who are interested in learning more about the field.

Our purpose in launching the LinkedIn.com community is to foster conversations related to disability management by establishing a forum for people to connect with their questions and suggestions, as well as to share their experiences. Our vision is that, in time, the CDMS group on LinkedIn.com will become the go-to place online for disability management issues, with a robust community of professionals willing to share their expertise and build our collective body of knowledge.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION
Establishing an online community also allows the CDMS Commission to reach out to a younger demographic for which social media, online networking, and mobile apps are the norm. We also envision that the LinkedIn group will provide an opportunity for “dual mentoring” between younger and seasoned members of the community.

As certified disability managers know, the field is dynamic and multi-disciplinary. For that reason, on LinkedIn.com, the CDMS group is now an “open community,” which enables the cyber world to see and share in the discussion, rather than limiting it to members of the group. The group's status as an open community also allows visibility on search engines and for discussions to be shared on Twitter and Facebook.

The CDMS Commission welcomes anyone with an interest in disability management to join and participate in the community. Come, be part of the conversation about disability management today. By participating, we have a unique opportunity to share, to learn, and to grow together.

Commissioners
Continued from page 5

*Patty Nunez, MA, CRC, CDMS, CCM*

Manager - Workers
Compensation Business Analysis,
CNA Insurance
Experience: 21 years

“Our field has great opportunity to impact the lives of workers in a positive way. The more interaction we have with employers, to increase their awareness of emerging issues and how they can have real control over costs related to disability and work absence, the better! This can only help to reinforce the value of each individual, and the importance of maximizing remain-at-work or return-to-work options.”
CDMS Commissioners
2011 – 2012

CHAIR
Edwin W. Quick MA, MBA, CRC, CCM, CDMS, GPHR
Executive Director, Disability Management Services
Fortune 500 Company
Chicago, IL

CHAIR-ELECT
Christine Moranda LSW, CDMS, CCM
Manager, Disability Services
OhioHealth, Associate Health & Wellness
Columbus, OH

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

TREASURER
Judith Parker M.Ed., CDMS, ABVE-D, CLCP
Vocational Counselor/Case Manager
OSC Vocational Systems, Inc.
Bothell, WA

CORE KNOWLEDGE OFFICER
Mary Jesko EdD, MS, CDMS, CCM, CRC, CLCP
Principal/Medical & Disability Case Manager
Medical Management Nurse Consultants
San Diego and Los Angeles, CA

PAST-CHAIR
Debbie L. Cromwell CDMS, CCMP, CPDM
Principal
Integrated Impact Management
Hendersonville, NC

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE
Patrick Beecher MD, MPH, MBA, FACOEM
President
Beecher Advisory Group
Traverse City, MI

John Czarick M.Ed., CDMS, ABVE, ABDA, CRP
Disability Manager/Vocational Expert
Schuylkill Haven, PA

Lynne Fairey RN, BSN, CCM, CDMS
Health Services and Integrated Disability Management
BMW Manufacturing Co., LLC
BMW Group Company
Spartanburg, SC

Larry Featherston Ph.D., CRC, CVE
Rehabilitation Specialist
CIGNA Group Insurance
McKinney, TX

Alicia Heine CDMS, CRC, CCM
National Director of Vocational & Disability Services
Ability Services Network
Granby, CT

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

Patty Nunez MA, CRC, CDMS, CCM
Manager-Medical Management
CNA Insurance
Brea, CA

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

PUBLIC MEMBER
Michael W. Thompson CSP
Global HSE Advisor
BP Upstream
Information Technology and Services
Houston, TX

Like what you’re reading?

Share it with others!
The CDMS Commission invites you to forward this issue of CDMSource to anyone who is interested in disability management.

The results are in...

The passing rate for the February 2011 CDMS certification examination was 65.4 percent. For those who used the CDMS Core Knowledge Curriculum as a study aid, the passing rate was 70 percent.

Congratulations to all Certificants!

Core Knowledge Curriculum Brochure Now Available

Learn more about the Core Knowledge Curriculum (CKC) – newly developed by the CDMS Commission in response to increased need for educational resources with a focus on disability and leaves of absence in the workplace. Use this online learning program as a supplement to exam prep, a pathway to the ADMS designation for those who cannot sit for the CDMS, or access to CE hours.

Download the online application form from the CDMS web site and apply now. Printed CKC brochures are available in quantity by special request. Contact the CDMS Administrative Office at 847.944.1335.

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

CDMS Commission
1699 E. Woodfield Road, Suite 300
Schaumburg, IL 60173-4957
847.944.1335 MAIN
847.944.1346 FAX
www.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 professional conduct, the Commission validates the core knowledge and competency of these experts.