Christopher A. Wheeler, RN

NURSE CASE MANAGER

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Registered Nurse with more than 15 years of experience spanning inpatient rehabilitation case management, psychiatric nursing, crisis assessment, and telephone triage. Coordinates complex discharge plans, post-acute services, and payer review documentation. Brings clinical judgment and patient advocacy to resolving barriers to care and helping patients and families navigate safe transitions.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Complex Discharge Planning • Interdisciplinary Care Coordination • Skilled Nursing Facility Placement • Home Health and Durable Medical Equipment • Continued-Stay Reviews • Medicare Discharge Appeals • Patient and Family Advocacy • Suicide Risk Assessment • Crisis Intervention • Telephone Triage

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Case Manager | Registered Nurse

Eastern Iowa Rehabilitation Hospital — Lifepoint Rehabilitation

Coralville, IA | September 2025–Present

- Manage discharge planning for approximately 12–16 inpatient rehabilitation patients, developing individualized plans and addressing barriers to safe transitions of care.
- Collaborate with physicians, nursing, PT, OT, and speech therapy; communicate patient progress, discharge barriers, and anticipated needs during interdisciplinary conferences.
- Arrange skilled nursing facility placements and home health services based on team recommendations and patient and family preferences.
- Coordinate durable medical equipment with therapy staff and vendors so necessary equipment is arranged before discharge.
- Submit clinical documentation for insurance continued-stay reviews and update authorization dates in Meditech following payer determinations.
- Assist Medicare beneficiaries with discharge appeals, explain patient rights, and coordinate required documentation.

Staff Nurse — Integrated Call Center

University of Iowa Health Care

Iowa City, IA | December 2020–May 2025

- Assessed symptoms by telephone and applied established nursing triage protocols to determine appropriate levels of care.
- Provided nursing advice, patient education, and follow-up guidance; collaborated with physicians and clinical staff to address concerns and coordinate care.
- Documented assessments, recommendations, and patient communications in the electronic medical record.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Psychiatric Access Nurse Specialist

Mercy Iowa City

Iowa City, IA | August 2015–November 2020

- Conducted psychiatric assessments to evaluate presenting symptoms, safety concerns, and appropriate levels of care.
- Provided crisis intervention, suicide risk assessment, and safety planning.
- Collaborated with psychiatrists, physicians, social workers, and other healthcare professionals to coordinate treatment.
- Facilitated psychiatric admissions and transfers, locating outside facilities when inpatient admission was unavailable.
- Guided patients and families through treatment recommendations, available resources, and follow-up care.

Staff Nurse / Psychiatric Access Nurse

Mercy Medical Center

Cedar Rapids, IA | July 2014–August 2015

- Provided psychiatric nursing care, crisis intervention, patient assessments, and interdisciplinary care coordination.

Staff Nurse

UnityPoint Health — St. Luke's Hospital

Cedar Rapids, IA | January 2011–July 2014

- Delivered inpatient psychiatric nursing care, including patient assessments, medication administration, crisis intervention, and collaboration with interdisciplinary treatment teams.

EDUCATION

Associate's Degree in Nursing

Kirkwood Community College | May 2010

Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, Minor in Social Work

University of Iowa | May 2008

LICENSES & CERTIFICATIONS

Registered Nurse — Iowa Multistate Compact License
Active through July 15, 2028

Basic Life Support (BLS) — American Heart Association
Current through June 2027

HONORS & RECOGNITION

2026 Mercy Award Recipient — Eastern Iowa Rehabilitation Hospital

2019 DAISY Award Nominee — Mercy Iowa City