

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Utilization Management & Managed Care Guidelines Fundamentals

Case Management Institute

COURSE IDENTIFICATION

Course Title	Utilization Management & Managed Care Guidelines Fundamentals
Provider	Case Management Institute, LLC (CMI)
Target Audience	Registered Nurses (RN), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN), Advanced Practice Nurses (APN), and other licensed healthcare professionals
Prerequisites	Active healthcare license required; minimum one year of acute care experience recommended
Total Contact Hours	9 hours (4 hours via CMI LMS; 5 hours via MCG LMS)
Delivery Format	Online, self-paced; Simulation Lab via MCG CareWeb platform
Approving Body	Florida Board of Nursing (CMI component)
Credential Pathway	Care Guidelines Specialist – ISC/GRC (MCG Certification; additional cost)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This continuing education course provides licensed healthcare professionals with a comprehensive foundation in utilization management and managed care guidelines. The curriculum is organized to move students progressively from foundational concepts to applied practice, beginning with the core principles and process of utilization management and advancing through reimbursement and insurance structures, healthcare legislation, levels of care, and the full continuum of care.

Units 5 through 8 are built around MCG Care Guidelines — the industry-standard clinical decision-support tool used by health plans, hospitals, and managed care organizations nationwide. Students apply these guidelines directly through a Simulation Lab component delivered via MCG’s CareWeb platform, providing hands-on experience that bridges didactic content and real-world practice.

The course is delivered across two platforms: the Case Management Institute’s learning management system, which provides four Florida Board of Nursing-approved continuing education hours across Units 1 through 4, and MCG’s LMS, which delivers an additional five continuing education hours through Units 5 through 8. Successful completion of all three course components — the CMI curriculum, the MCG LMS modules, and the Simulation Lab — satisfies the employment eligibility requirements for the Care Guidelines Specialist – ISC/GRC certification offered through MCG.

COURSE GOALS

This course is designed to achieve four overarching educational goals that reflect the professional competencies required for effective utilization management practice.

Develop Foundational UM Competency.

Students will gain a thorough understanding of the utilization management process, including the principles, terminology, and workflow that govern how clinical decisions are reviewed, documented, and communicated within managed care environments.

Build Applied Knowledge of Insurance and Reimbursement Systems.

Students will develop working knowledge of healthcare reimbursement structures, insurance plan types, public program benefits, and the legislative frameworks that shape coverage determinations and patient financial obligations.

Strengthen Clinical Decision-Making Across the Continuum of Care.

Students will apply MCG Care Guidelines to determine the appropriate level of care, manage inpatient stays, and support discharge planning across acute, post-acute, home, and community-based settings.

Prepare Students for Professional Certification.

Upon completion, students will meet the employment eligibility requirements for the Care Guidelines Specialist – ISC/GRC certification and will possess the applied knowledge and experience necessary to pursue that credential through MCG.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

The curriculum employs an adult learning model that integrates didactic instruction with applied, scenario-based practice. Content is presented through video, written, and audio instruction, providing multiple modalities to support diverse learning styles. Case scenarios are incorporated throughout the curriculum to ground theoretical concepts in clinical contexts and to develop the practical reasoning skills required in utilization management practice.

Units 1 through 4 are delivered through the CMI learning management system (LMS) and establish the foundational and contextual knowledge base of the course. Units 5 through 8 are delivered through MCG's LMS and CMI's Simulation Lab and represent the applied component of the course in which students work directly with MCG Care Guidelines. The Simulation Lab utilizes MCG's CareWeb platform and provides a structured environment in which students practice applying MCG Care Guidelines to realistic patient scenarios under instructor oversight, with individualized feedback provided to support mastery.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

Student learning is assessed through a multi-modal evaluation strategy designed to measure both knowledge acquisition and applied clinical competency. The following table summarizes each assessment type, its purpose, and the standard required for successful completion.

Assessment Type	Description	Passing Standard
Module Quizzes	Objective assessments administered at the conclusion of each CMI LMS unit to verify knowledge acquisition before the student advances.	80% or higher
Written Assignments	Applied writing assignments reviewed and evaluated by a CMI instructor.	Satisfactory completion as determined by the instructor
MCG LMS Completion	Completion of all required modules on MCG's LMS, recorded automatically by the MCG platform.	All required modules completed
Simulation Lab	Holistic instructor evaluation of student performance applying MCG Care Guidelines to clinical scenarios via the MCG CareWeb platform. Written feedback is provided with opportunity for multiple attempts.	Instructor confirmation of satisfactory completion

UNIT OUTLINES

The following outlines detail the learning outcomes and content for each of the eight units. Learning outcomes are written in behavioral terms and organized by Bloom's Taxonomy level to reflect the cognitive demand placed on the learner. Units 1 through 4 are delivered via the CMI learning management system; Units 5 through 8 are delivered via MCG's LMS and Simulation Lab.

Unit 1 | Introduction to Utilization Management and the UM Process

This foundational unit establishes the conceptual and procedural basis for utilization management practice. Students examine the relationship between utilization review and utilization management, explore the rationale for UM programs within managed care environments, and learn to execute the end-to-end UM workflow — from eligibility verification through clinical review, approval, documentation, and the appeal process. Students who complete this unit will be equipped to perform core UM functions and to compose documentation that supports clinical decision-making.

Bloom's Level	Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to:
Comprehension	Differentiate between utilization review and utilization management and explain the rationale for each.
Knowledge	Describe the primary types of utilization management.
Application	Perform the utilization management process, including eligibility verification, covered benefit verification, criteria review, and clinical data gathering.
Analysis	Review clinical information to determine whether established criteria are met and identify the appropriate next step in the UM workflow.
Synthesis	Compose clinical documentation that supports the approval of requested services and includes all required information.
Comprehension	Explain the purpose and structure of the appeal process.
Analysis	Summarize the types of appeals available and determine the basis for a denial.

Content Area	Topics Covered
Core Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilization review vs. utilization management Rationale for UM programs Types of utilization management
UM Workflow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligibility verification Covered benefit and pre-authorization verification Clinical information gathering Criteria review and approval notification Documentation standards MD review process when criteria are not met
Appeals & Denials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appeal process and types Reasons for denial determinations

Unit 2 | Insurance Principles

Unit 2 provides a comprehensive foundation in the insurance and reimbursement structures that govern managed care. Students develop fluency in core insurance terminology, gain the ability to calculate patient cost-sharing obligations, and learn to apply coordination of benefits rules in multi-payer situations. The unit examines the full landscape of insurance plan types — from commercial managed care products to employer-sponsored and individually purchased plans, COBRA continuation coverage, and ACA marketplace options — before moving into an in-depth treatment of Medicaid and Medicare, including all four parts of Medicare, Medigap supplemental coverage, and the Prospective Payment System. The Two-Midnight Rule and Medicare Outpatient Observation Notice (MOON) are addressed with emphasis on their implications for case managers.

Bloom's Level	Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to:
Knowledge	Define key insurance and reimbursement terms used in utilization management practice.
Application	Calculate a patient's out-of-pocket cost given the cost of service and applicable cost-sharing provisions.
Analysis	Determine primary and secondary insurance when a patient holds more than one health insurance policy.
Comprehension	Discuss the reimbursement and payment methodologies currently used in managed care.
Comprehension	Explain the major types of health insurance available in the current market, including managed care plan structures.
Knowledge	Describe the purpose and structure of COBRA continuation coverage and identify who is eligible.
Knowledge	Describe the key provisions of the Affordable Care Act relevant to utilization management practice.
Analysis	Select patients who may be eligible for Medicaid and summarize the Medicaid Hospice benefit.
Analysis	Select patients who may be eligible for Medicare and identify coverage under each of the four parts.
Knowledge	Describe the Medicare hospice benefit and explain the purpose of Medigap supplemental insurance.
Analysis	Differentiate between Medicare and Medicaid across key dimensions of eligibility, funding, and coverage.
Comprehension	Explain Medicare reimbursement structures and the classification systems applied to different service types.
Application	Apply Medicare's Two-Midnight Rule, the Medicare Inpatient-Only List, and the Medicare Outpatient Observation Notice (MOON) to clinical situations.
Analysis	Explain the implications of the Two-Midnight Rule for patients and articulate the corresponding responsibilities of the case manager.

Content Area	Topics Covered
Reimbursement Fundamentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key insurance and reimbursement terminology • Coinsurance, copayment, deductible, and out-of-pocket maximums • Medical necessity and precertification • Underinsured populations

Content Area	Topics Covered
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-contractual benefits • Coordination of benefits • Reimbursement and payment methodologies
Commercial Insurance & Managed Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPO, EPO, Point-of-Service, and HMO plan structures • Pharmacy Benefit Management • Employer-sponsored health coverage • Individually purchased insurance • COBRA: purpose, eligibility, and duration • Affordable Care Act: key provisions and marketplace plans
Medicaid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicaid eligibility criteria • Medicaid Hospice Benefit
Medicare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicare eligibility criteria • Medicare Parts A, B, C (Advantage), and D • Medicare Hospice Coverage • Medigap (Medicare Supplement Insurance) • Prospective Payment System (PPS) • Two-Midnight Rule and the Medicare Inpatient-Only List • Medicare Outpatient Observation Notice (MOON)

Unit 3 | Health-Related Legislation

Unit 3 situates utilization management practice within its broader federal legislative context. Students examine the laws and acts that have shaped patient protections, coverage mandates, and healthcare delivery since the late 1970s, with particular attention to the evolution of mental health parity legislation and the cumulative impact of the Affordable Care Act. Upon completing this unit, students will be able to apply relevant legislation to UM and utilization review decision-making with confidence.

Bloom's Level	Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to:
Application	Apply healthcare-related legislation to utilization management and utilization review decision-making.
Analysis	Explain how the Affordable Care Act built upon and enhanced prior mental health parity legislation.

Content Area	Topics Covered
Federal Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) • COBRA coverage provisions • Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) • Mental Health Parity Acts • Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 • Newborns' and Mothers' Protection Act of 1996 • Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998 • American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
ACA Provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Care Act: core provisions and impact on utilization management

Content Area	Topics Covered
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic exchanges of summary of care • Additional ACA implementation phases • ACA enhancement of mental health legislation

Unit 4 | Acuity and Severity Levels, Levels of Care, and Care Settings

Unit 4 introduces the continuum of care settings and equips students to apply clinical criteria to level-of-care determinations. Students examine the range of care environments, from acute care through custodial and alternative settings, and develop the ability to order these settings appropriately based on patient need. The factors used to evaluate patient acuity and severity are examined in depth. This unit provides the clinical foundation necessary for the applied scenario work in Units 5 through 8.

Bloom's Level	Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to:
Analysis	Compare the care settings available across the continuum and articulate the level of care provided in each.
Analysis	Choose the rehabilitation delivery system most appropriate to a given patient's needs.
Knowledge	Identify the standardized assessment of physical functioning used in rehabilitation settings.
Knowledge	Identify the factors and tools used to determine patient acuity and severity level.

Content Area	Topics Covered
Care Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acute care • Long-Term Acute Care (LTAC) • Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility (IRF) • Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) • Home Health • Hospice • Specialty Care • Custodial Care • Alternative Care Facilities
Clinical Assessment Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level-of-care ordering and clinical criteria • Factors used to identify acuity and severity level • Tools used to identify acuity and severity level

Unit 5 | MCG — Inpatient & Surgical Care

Unit 5 marks the transition from foundational instruction to applied clinical practice using MCG Care Guidelines. Working through a structured series of case scenarios, students practice making admission, status, stay extension, and discharge determinations in inpatient and surgical care contexts. Students apply the tools and criteria introduced in earlier units to real-world scenarios, developing the judgment required to manage inpatient stays effectively and to support appropriate and timely discharge.

Bloom's Level	Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to:
Analysis	Determine the appropriateness of a procedure or admission to acute care using MCG criteria.
Analysis	Identify the stage of the optimal or general recovery course a given patient is following.
Evaluation Application	Determine whether a patient has met the criteria for discharge from acute care. Apply available tools to the discharge planning process for inpatient and surgical patients.
Analysis	Determine whether a patient meets observation versus inpatient admission criteria.
Evaluation	Evaluate when a stay extension is clinically warranted and determine the appropriate length.
Evaluation	Manage an inpatient stay and identify applicable discharge planning resources.

Content Area	Topics Covered
Inpatient & Surgical Scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case scenarios #1–#7: admission appropriateness, status determinations (inpatient vs. observation), stay extensions, and discharge criteria
Applied Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCG inpatient criteria application Observation vs. inpatient status determination Stay extension evaluation Inpatient discharge planning and resource identification

Unit 6 | MCG — General Recovery Care

Unit 6 extends MCG guideline application to the general recovery care context. Students work through case scenarios designed to build their ability to track patient progress against established General Recovery Care Guidelines and to make ongoing care management decisions within this framework. The unit develops the evaluative skills needed to identify when a patient is progressing appropriately and when intervention is needed.

Bloom's Level	Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to:
Analysis	Determine the appropriateness of admission to inpatient care in the general recovery context.
Evaluation Analysis	Evaluate a patient's progress against General Recovery Care Guidelines. Choose the stage of the general treatment course a patient is following.

Bloom's Level	Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to:
Evaluation	Determine when care management adjustments or setting transitions are indicated.

Content Area	Topics Covered
General Recovery Care Scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case scenarios #1–#4: recovery course identification, progress evaluation, and ongoing care management
Applied Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCG General Recovery Care Guideline application Patient progress evaluation against clinical benchmarks Care management decision-making within the general recovery framework

Unit 7 | MCG — Home Care

Unit 7 focuses on the discharge planning process and guideline application specific to the home care setting. Students apply MCG clinical indicators to determine the appropriateness of home care admission, evaluate ongoing home care status, and identify the discharge planning resources available to support transitions to home-based care. The unit uses case scenarios to develop students' ability to apply the General Treatment Course framework within home care.

Bloom's Level	Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to:
Analysis	Determine the appropriateness of a patient's admission to the home care setting using MCG criteria.
Knowledge	Describe the General Treatment Course applicable to home care patients.
Evaluation	Evaluate a patient's ongoing home care status against established clinical criteria.
Knowledge	Identify the discharge planning resources available to support home care transitions.

Content Area	Topics Covered
Applied Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCG clinical indicators for home care admission General Treatment Course in the home care setting Evaluation of ongoing home care status Discharge planning resources for home care
Case Scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Scenario — Home care appropriateness determination Case Scenario — Home care planning and resource identification

Unit 8 | MCG — Recovery Facility Care

The final unit addresses the post-acute recovery facility continuum, focusing on subacute and inpatient rehabilitation levels of care. Students apply MCG clinical indications to determine appropriate placement at the IRF and SNF levels, develop individualized recovery facility courses of care, and apply discharge planning resources to support transitions out of the recovery facility setting.

Bloom's Level	Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to:
Application	Use MCG Clinical Indications to determine the appropriateness of admission to subacute and inpatient rehabilitation levels of care.
Analysis	Determine the appropriateness of care at the IRF and SNF levels for a given patient.
Synthesis	Develop a patient's recovery facility course of care.
Knowledge	Identify the discharge planning resources available for recovery facility care.
Application	Apply discharge planning resources to support care transitions from the recovery facility setting.

Content Area	Topics Covered
Applied Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCG clinical indications for IRF and SNF admission • IRF vs. SNF level-of-care determination • Recovery facility course of care development • Discharge planning resources for recovery facility care
Case Scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Scenario — Recovery facility placement determination • Case Scenario — Level-of-care determination • Case Scenario — Care planning • Case Scenario — Comprehensive integrative scenario