

Clinical Care Coordination



Quick Reference Guide

What is clinical care coordination?

Why is it so difficult for my providers to talk to each other?

How do I ensure they talk to each other?

**What information should I share?
What are things that should be discussed?**

Can anyone help manage communication?

Can my friends and other support systems help me?

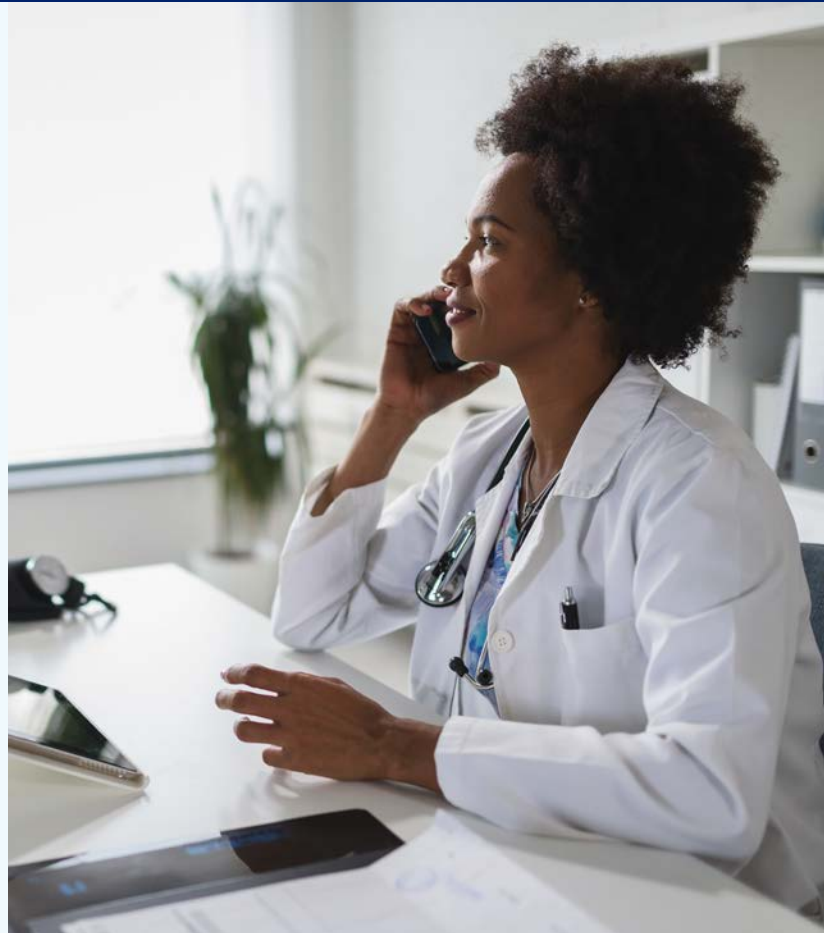
 [Medical Services](#)

 [Health Promotion Appointment](#)

What is clinical care coordination?

Clinical care coordination, also called case management, is the effort to organize patient care across multiple offices and healthcare providers. This is useful for people who need a team of dedicated healthcare providers. This might include:

- Chronic health conditions, like Crohn's, PCOS, or diabetes
- Complex health needs, like preparing for surgery or staying in a hospital for inpatient care
- Connections to social services for basic needs and financial assistance



Healthcare providers often need your permission to communicate with each other about your care. To facilitate this, you may need to request that they discuss your care with each other. You may also need to nudge them between appointments.

Having to collect your medical records and act as a bridge between your providers can be frustrating. Check out our [guide on medical records](#) for ways to help smooth this process. →

Why is it so difficult for my providers to talk to each other?

While this can be annoying to navigate, these restrictions are in place to protect your privacy and your health records.

The [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act](#), or HIPAA, outlines strict limits to how and why healthcare providers can share information about a patient, even with other providers.

Just as it's frustrating for patients to navigate this system, the same applies to healthcare providers. It takes time to advocate for patients through insurance appeals, find common time to speak with providers in another facility or out of network, or even to verify they can legally communicate with another provider.

Providers need to have written permission from the patient to share their information, and even then, they can only share it with the specific individuals that are named in those forms. These forms are often called Medical Release Forms, or an [Authorization for the Release of Health Information](#).



When establishing care with a new provider or specialist, you may want to prioritize selecting someone who is able and willing to coordinate with your existing medical providers. Here are some things to consider:

- What is their communication style?
- Do your existing providers have any recommendations for providers to see?
- What is their current practice of communicating with other providers?
- How do they prefer to communicate with other providers? Email, fax, phone calls, video calls, etc.
- What experience do they have as part of a care coordination team? Is this experience relevant to your health needs?

For more support in choosing a healthcare provider and getting ready for an appointment, check out our guides on [speaking to primary care](#), [mental health](#), or [medical specialists](#).

Once I've signed the form, **how do I ensure they talk to each other?**

Even with the forms signed, communication won't be perfect – especially if your providers are in separate offices or facilities! Here are some general strategies that can help improve communication:

1. Ensure that your care team has each other's contact info. You can supply them with copies of their business cards or create a document with everyone's contact information in it and attach it to your medical records.
2. Send your medical records and health history forms to all providers, including your immunization records, allergies, and medication list.

Pro tip: Anytime you start a new medication, ensure those records have been sent along to other members of your team!
3. Prepare for your appointment by writing down a list of questions beforehand. Afterwards, share any relevant notes or action items with other providers as needed.
4. At the end of an appointment, request that any notes be sent to your other providers, especially your primary care provider.

What information should I share? **What are things that should be discussed?**

This depends on your specific needs. Talk to your providers about what is most helpful. Generally, you might want to share:

- Lab results or the results of other tests or exams
- Changes to your treatment plan
- Current medications, including how much you're taking
- Any changes to your health insurance or other financial benefits

Keeping your providers in the loop will help them provide the best care. A new diagnosis or medication may impact your treatment with another provider. There could be interactions between different medications or a different type may work better with your current treatment plan.

These are also things you should keep track of, too! Consider downloading your results into a secure folder on your computer, or keeping physical copies in a locked drawer.

Be sure to bring these with you to any appointments!

Can anyone help manage communication?

That depends! Check with your primary care provider or your regular specialists to see if their team has a case manager, service provider, social worker, or other care coordination staff. These are providers who can help you manage different appointments or lab tests. They can also follow up with your providers and advocate for your needs.

Depending on your insurance plan, you may also have access to a case manager through their system. Reach out to your insurance company through the contact info listed on their website or your insurance card for more information.

Can my friends and other support systems help me?

Absolutely! Friends, family, and other loved ones can help you with collecting these records and go with you to appointments. They can also help advocate for you, ask questions, or help you remember key discussion points.

Online and digital spaces can also be helpful! This is especially true for people with rare health conditions or who are in the process of being diagnosed. You might find it reassuring to hear other people's experiences or tips and tricks from people like you. Just make sure that the information being shared is accurate and trustworthy.

Have questions or are unsure how to get started? Schedule a [Health Promotion Appointment](#).

If you've established care with a provider at Columbia Health, you can get support through the case management and social work teams, especially for off-campus care and referrals:



For medical care, send your primary care provider a message through the Patient Portal to ask to be connected to a case manager.



For mental health care, call **(212) 854-2878** to schedule a social work consult with the social work team.

[Back to Top](#)

