

The Center for Case Management Spotlight: Dr. Thomas Higgins

As Chief Medical Officer of The Center for Case Management, Dr. Thomas Higgins is eager to assist in assessing, educating, and helping implement strategies that will maximize patient flow and efficiency. With his skills, experience, and knowledge he is helping lead The Center for Case Management in a new and innovative direction.

Dr. Higgins graduated from Boston University School of Medicine, trained at the Cleveland Clinic and Massachusetts General Hospital, and is Professor of Medicine and Anesthesiology at UMass-Baystate. He is a fellow in the American College of Physicians (FACP) and the American Association of Physician Leaders (FAAPL) and achieved master status in critical care (MCCM). His first experience working as a Physician Advisor dates back to the early 1990's when he and his team inaugurated fast-track recovery for open heart surgery while working at the Cleveland Clinic. The research and work of Dr. Higgins and his team enabled them to re-engineer the entire process for open heart surgery patients with uncomplicated cases. The results ended in shortening the length of stay for patients, from 7-10 days to 5, and cutting the cost per patient from \$26-27,000 to about \$16,000. Dr. Higgins subsequently served as a Physician Advisor at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, and supervised case management activities in his role as a Chief Medical Officer at 3 hospitals.

As Chief Medical Officer of The Center for Case Management, Dr. Higgins' goal is to find the best and most efficient way to take care of patients whether it is by decreasing the length of a patient's stay, implementing a case hub for an ACO model, or helping with migrating to bundled patient care initiatives. Through assessments and one-on-one educational experiences with other Physician Advisors, he creates a plan using a hierarchy framework that breaks down the best practices for patient care:

1. **Safety:** Dr. Higgins believes safety is most important when it comes to patient care. Whatever is done must first be safe for the patient, regardless of other goals.
2. **Quality:** Dr. Higgins and The Center for Case Management team want to always do the best possible job to sustain and improve quality metrics.
3. **Patient Experience:** The way the patient perceives their care experience is critical. Dr. Higgins and his team want to make sure the patient was listened to, had their questions answered, and are made to feel as comfortable as possible.
4. **Value:** Dr. Higgins and The Center for Case Management Team are dedicated to delivering the best care at the lowest possible cost.

With three Physician Advisors currently on his team, Dr. Higgins is hoping to expand the network as the company continues to grow. His knowledge and experience in medical informatics allows him to help case management departments by keeping track of data for patients through a dashboard. Because of his knowledge and experience, he is currently aiding in the development of the first national interactive case management dashboard system, Clinical Arm of The Revenue Team (CART), alongside The Center for Case Management team.