

Why Retain a Physician Certified Life Care Planner?

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The advantage of retaining a Physician Certified Life Care Planner can be broken down into two important questions: 1) Why retain a Certified Life Care Planner (CLCP)?
2) Why retain a Physician (MD)?

Let's expand the first question into: Why retain a Certified Life Care Planner (CLCP), credentialed through the International Commission on Health Care Certification (ICHCC)?

A CLCP has been peer-reviewed by a comprehensive ICHCC approved course, which includes a thorough review and satisfactory validation of a CLCP candidate's methodology and work product, a life care plan for a catastrophic injury.

Furthermore, a CLCP agrees:

- To adhere to set of practice standards and ethical guidelines established by an international life care planning certification agency
- To be peer-reviewed by a professional board of commissioners of the primary certification agency in life care planning
- To be scrutinized by a governing board regarding one's practice behaviors, methods and techniques.
- To be disciplined by a governing board for consumer or peer complaints

Next, let's address the second question and add the MD to CLCP, which reflects the synergy and vital importance of a MD, CLCP to a life care plan.

- The ICHCC's 2018 Role and Function Study identifies Factors and Subfactors of the Job Task Inventory of Life Care Planners (in-press, Journal of Life Care Planning). Specifically, factor 14, subfactor 3 states: "Have a physician review the life care plan prior to submission to referral source."
- The Fourth Edition of Weed and Beren's Life Care Planning and Case

Management Handbook states: “Non physician life care planners generally depend on physician input to develop medically appropriate plans. All of the elements of a life care plan must be medically necessary and appropriate.”

- The American Academy of Physician Life Care Planners (AAPLCP) under its mission, and history and context of life care planning section, states:

“Despite advancements in recent decades, most life care plans [and most life care planners] still fail to credibly substantiate the medical opinions and quantitative conclusions they express, and these common failures regularly jeopardize the same people life care plans are intended to help. A primary reason for this is, relatively few life care planners possess the education, training, or professional capacity to independently address the first two Basic Questions of life care planning, i.e. what is a subject’s condition, and what does a subject’s condition require? These questions necessitate the formulation of medical opinions regarding diagnostic conditions, disabilities, probable durations of care, and future care requirements. The formulation of medical opinion is beyond the bounds of most life care planners’ professional licensure; and this lack of professional capacity presents non-physician life care planners with a material challenge.”

“Non-physician life care planners’ lack of requisite capacity to independently formulate medical opinion, and their lack of requisite capacity to present opinion testimony regarding the existence of a medical condition or its likely progression, regularly jeopardizes the parties who rely upon life care plans to substantiate medical conditions, formulate care requirements, and quantify medically-related compensatory claims , i.e. the subjects of life care plans, the parties who customarily commission their production, courts, and ultimately, life care planners themselves.”

In sum, retaining and entrusting a Physician Certified Life Care Planner (MD, CLCP) to prepare a life care plan for those with catastrophic and non-catastrophic injuries has two major benefits:

1. Achieves a life care plan with a strong medical foundation that assures the injured individual attains the highest level of independence, function, and quality of life that is possible, and for as long as possible.
2. Achieves a defensible life care plan within a reasonable degree of certainty that satisfies the five Daubert Factors and FRE 702 in expert witness opinion and testimony.