



# The Aging Life Care Association® Celebrates Its 35th Anniversary

## Forged by Women Entrepreneurs to Educate and Develop Geriatric Care Professionals

Thirty-five years ago, a group of visionary women in eldercare created a profession and a professional association. Originally the National Association of Private Geriatric Care Managers (NAPGCM), this non-profit has grown from 75 members to the now 2,000-strong Aging Life Care Association® (ALCA). Since 1985, Aging Life Care Association members have cared for about two million older adults. The impact of their expert care continues to multiply exponentially, across generations, and systems of care, including hospitals, home health agencies and public programs.

**All of the Care Resources Team consists of Advanced Practice - Certified Care Managers, and are all Members of the Aging Life Care Association.**

**We are the experts in aging well, and serve Pinellas, Pasco, Citrus and Hernando counties.**



As a result of a New York Times article, written by Glen Collins in 1983, a handful of practicing Geriatric Care Managers learned about each other and their similar practices.

This article prompted an initial gathering between Rona Bartelstone, Sarah Cohen, Leonie Nowitz, Lenise Dolen and Adele Elkind in New York. This led to an organizational meeting for what became NAPGCM, which immediately drew other professionals from across the country.

Collins' article "Long-Distance Care of Elderly Relative a Growing Problem" is timelier today than ever as our nation's families are spread across the country and the globe. A quick look at some numbers emphasize the exponential growth of the need for, and relevance of, a variety of Aging Life Care Managers®. In 1988, approximately 3.3 million disabled elderly had at least some paid care services, generating \$3.1 billion out-of-pocket costs for themselves and their families. In 2000, home care expenditure was about \$32 billion and by 2017 this figure increased to approximately \$97 billion, without considering all the other costs of caregiving for both the care recipient, the family, and community.



A defining characteristic of ALCA is that it has been birthed and led primarily by women. Breaking traditional norms, these founding women began their own practices setting the stage for future generations of entrepreneurial women in a variety of healthcare-related industries. More than 85% of ALCA's membership continues to be female small-business owners, making this industry distinctive for continued dominance by female leaders.

The association's second President, Rona Bartelstone reflected on the fledgling organization's start commenting, "From the very beginning, the Association was mission-driven and committed to the highest level of services for older adults, those with disabilities, and their families. Our members learned how to take leadership in shaping the very nature of elder care service delivery in their local communities. By setting the example for excellence in care, changes have been wrought at the highest level of government,

where care coordination has been written into Medicare and related health systems for the older population. ALCA professionals continue to be dedicated experts and role models for the best in Aging Life Care™ services.”

Groups around the country began to meet regularly, to create national Standards of Practice and a Code of Ethics. Regional chapters began forming, starting with Florida, then New York, and now nine regional ALCA chapters cover the United States and Canada. Chapters and local groups always had a focus on creating expertise, extraordinary customer service, and sustainable business models. The burgeoning organization produced an annual national conference, a regular newsletter, and finally a professional journal. Members routinely presented papers, workshops, and panel presentations at related national organizations such as the American Society on Aging (ASA), the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the National Association of Elder Law Attorneys, The Gerontological Association, and many more.

The association changed its name and brand in 2015 to better reflect a more holistic approach to larger aging issues, as well as reflect the larger population of clients served by the professionals.

“ALCA was there when no one else was looking at these issues and has stayed true to its mission throughout its three-and-a-half-decade history,” stated former ALCA President Claudia Fine (2002). “These pioneers saw the need for professionals in care management to continue to learn and serve the aging population and have been fulfilling that need since the late 80s.” The organization is built on helping others, whether that means other care managers, other agencies, other clients.

Aging Life Care Professionals® have extensive training and experience working with older adults, people with disabilities, and families who need assistance with caregiving issues. Working with families, the expertise of Aging Life Care Professionals provides solutions at times of uncertainty and crises. Through a process of assessment, care planning and implementation, advocacy, education, decision support, and coaching, the Aging Life Care Professional guides families to those specific actions and decisions that ensure quality care and optimal functioning for those they love. Aging Life Care services thereby reduce stress, anxiety, uncertainty and lost time from work for family caregivers.

“With 72 million baby boomers aging in the United States, Aging Life Care Professionals are becoming a cornerstone in the caregiving industry,” CEO Taney Hamill says. “These professionals work alongside Elder Law attorneys, physicians, bank trust and estate officers, accountants, and community agencies to guide families through a myriad of aging, health, and care-related issues.”

Current Board of Directors President Liz Barlowe added, “As ALCA celebrates its 35th Anniversary, the association is proud of its longevity and ability to help Aging Life Care Professionals further their education, meet high standards of practice and ethics, and help grow their practices.”