

## Social Work

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Social Workers at VA North Texas Health Care System are an integral part of health care. We help veterans and their families with problems associated with the stress of an illness and assist them meeting their after care needs following a hospitalization. Social workers are located



both in the inpatient and outpatient areas.

Assistance is provided in making the best possible transition from hospital to home or other community

settings. Social workers also provide information about VA and community resources. Social workers are available to assist with a wide variety of patient care and treatment issues.

Working with the patient, the family and the treatment team, the social worker assesses problems and develops individualized care plans, which include financial and vocational planning and referrals to various community resources.

All social workers in the VA North Texas Health Care System have a Master's Degree in Social Work (MSW). Most of the social workers are licensed as Master (LMSW) or Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).

VANTHCS social workers are committed to providing field instruction to graduate social work interns. VANTHCS provides field training for selected interns from accredited Schools of Social Work, which have approved affiliation agreements with VANTHCS. Current academic affiliations are with Texas A&M University at Commerce and University of Texas at Arlington.

## Role of the Professional Social Worker

*Discharge Planner* - Discharge Planning is the designated responsibility of Social Work. The primary goal of discharge planning is to help the patient return to the community setting that best meets his/her continuing care requirements and to assist the patient to maintain their highest level of functioning at the least restrictive level of care.

*Resource Specialist* - Social Work is responsible for the identification of community resources which best meet the veteran's needs and for assisting the veteran to gain access to those resources. These resources may include community support groups, information about potential sources of disability income, temporary shelters, counseling programs, substance abuse treatment programs, and employment information and other community.

*Patient and Staff Education* - The social worker serves in a liaison capacity with other professional disciplines in providing psychosocial information. We help patients and families cope with the social and emotional aspects of illness or injury. We assist patients in problem solving, communication skills, Advanced Directives, and patient advocacy.

***"Social Workers Make Things Happen"***

## Scope of Services

- Information, linkage and referral
- Health education
- Outreach to homeless veterans
- Care placement options
- Financial assistance referral
- Pre-admission planning
- Assistance with nursing home placement
- Discharge planning (for inpatients with follow-up care)
- Transportation
- Combat veteran services
- Legal assistance
- Referral for physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse
- Home health services
- Social assessment, intervention, and aftercare services
- Housing and community living
- End of life planning advance directives and durable powers of attorney for health care or finances

The OEF/OIF team includes a program manager, transition patient advocate, social worker, nurse case manager and case manager to coordinate care for combat veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Transportation for OEF/OIF veterans to VA appointments is provided by the Marine Corps League. The OEF/OIF team also works with family members to provide resources available in the community.

Referrals to Social Work Service may be made by physician, nurse, patient advocate, self-referral, family member/significant other, or community agency. Please contact Social Work Service at 214-857-0388 or 214-857-0367 to request a Social Work Service consultation. Social workers are available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. except on federal holidays.

Social workers provide clinical services to patients and significant others in the Medical Center, in the home and in the community through specialty programs.

- Hospital Based Primary Care
- Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Program
- VA Community Nursing Home
- Adult Day Health Care
- HIV/AIDS Case Management