

MAHCP Career Profile

Social Worker

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Social Work service in the Health Care setting can best be summarized as Diversity. Social Workers provide service to many areas such as, Maternal/ Child Health, Medicine, Geriatrics, Oncology, Dialysis, Surgery, Mental Health, Cardiac Services, Emergency, and Palliative Care programs. Both inpatients and outpatients are seen by Social Work by consultation, client/ patient request, community mandated/legal sources, or by case finding by a Social Worker.

In a Health Care setting, Social Workers, minimally, must complete a 4 year undergraduate degree in Social Work (BSW) from an accredited University. More specialized service areas may require a Master's Degree (MSW) and program specific education/training criteria. Currently all Social Workers, who are employed within the WRHA or RHA, must be registered with the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers (MIRSW). Social Workers who were hired prior to the WRHA inception, are not required to be registered with the MIRSW, but must meet the MIRSW's standards for professional development and best practice.

The profession is governed by the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Practice 2005. Core Social Work Values and Principles include:

- Value 1: Respect for Inherent Dignity and Worth of Persons**
- Value 2: Pursuit of Social Justice**
- Value 3: Service to Humanity**
- Value 4: Integrity of Professional Practice**
- Value 5: Confidentiality in Professional Practice**
- Value 6: Competence in Professional Practice**

Social Work service provides a psychosocial assessment of patients and families and assists them to access resources available, both in hospital and the community. A systemic approach, which gathers information on the individual, interpersonal relationships and the environment, are the key elements of a Social Work assessment. Housing, finances, assistance with maintaining independent living, supportive living, safety concerns, addictions treatment, education, and mandated services such as Public Trustee and Child and Family

Services, may be assessed as needed to assist the patient in a successful transition and safe discharge from hospital. Adjustment to illness, supportive treatment, decision making, resource counseling, personal care home paneling, new and young mother supports, grief and bereavement counseling are but some of the services offered by Social Work. The profession works collaboratively with all disciplines

involved in patient care, and advocates for program development or change, to meet patients' needs in a culturally appropriate, timely and meaningful manner. Social Work provides support to the frontline staff of the units they serve, and education that may be helpful for the staff in understanding the social circumstances, inequities, poverty, and racism individual patients and their communities may have experienced.

Social Workers work collaboratively with many Universities throughout Canada in providing Field Instruction for Faculty of Social Work students. Clinical experience and mentorship are offered to the students with evaluation, and recommendations for further learning provided to the Faculty of Social Work. Ongoing professional development education is key to Social Work values as the profession strives to provide best practice and maintain or improve standards of practice. Social Work is about respect, caring, compassion and advocacy for patients involved in the health care system, and extends to families, local and global communities. Human dignity and rights are the core principles that motivate Social Workers in their practice. It is the completion of total health care treatment as it addresses the emotional and social impact illness may have on patients. Social Work assists patients to identify their own strengths and abilities to cope with their experience within the health care system, and to build upon their inner resources for the future.