

## Chapter 1 : Introductory Guide to Medical Social Work - [blog.quintoapp.com](http://blog.quintoapp.com)

*Nearly all medical social work careers require a Master's in Social Work with a clinical focus. It is rare for someone with a Bachelor's in Social Work to be eligible for a medical social worker position, although some positions exist under the supervision of a MSW.*

Supervisory, administrative, and staff training positions usually require an advanced degree. College and university teaching positions and most research appointments normally require a doctorate in social work DSW or PhD. Other Qualifications Medical social workers must be honest, ethical, and reliable, and very sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. They must be able to handle high-stress situations and negative emotions calmly and professionally. Some work on interdisciplinary teams that evaluate certain kinds of patients—geriatric or organ transplant patients, for example. Medical and public health social workers might work for hospitals, nursing and personal care facilities, individual and family services agencies, or local governments. Work Environment Full-time social workers usually work a standard hour week; however, some occasionally work evenings and weekends to meet with clients, attend community meetings, and handle emergencies. Some, particularly in voluntary nonprofit agencies, work part-time. Social workers usually spend most of their time in an office or residential facility, but also may travel locally to visit clients, meet with service providers, or attend meetings. Some may use one of several offices within a local area in which to meet with clients. The work, while satisfying, can be emotionally draining. Understaffing and large caseloads add to the pressure in some agencies. To tend to patient care or client needs, many hospitals and long-term care facilities are employing social workers on teams with a broad mix of occupations, including clinical specialists, registered nurses, and health aides. On the Job Advocate for clients or patients to resolve crises. Refer patient, client, or family to community resources to assist in recovery from mental or physical illness and to provide access to services such as financial assistance, legal aid, housing, job placement or education. Counsel clients and patients in individual and group sessions to help them overcome dependencies, recover from illness, and adjust to life. Utilize consultation data and social work experience to plan and coordinate client or patient care and rehabilitation, following through to ensure service efficacy. Plan discharge from care facility to home or other care facility. Organize support groups or counsel family members to assist them in understanding, dealing with, and supporting the client or patient. Monitor, evaluate, and record client progress according to measurable goals described in treatment and care plan. Identify environmental impediments to client or patient progress through interviews and review of patient records.

## Chapter 2 : Medical Social Worker Education

*This article describes what medical and health social workers do as well as where they work, what type of education they have and some job growth and salary data. Find professional resources where you can learn more about the profession and certification in the medical and health social worker field.*

In hospital settings, has a critical role in the area of discharge planning, ensuring that the services a patient will require are in place before the patient is discharged. A Medical Social Worker is a social worker who works in a medical setting such as a hospital, outpatient clinic, hospice, long-term care facility, or community health agency. What does a Medical Social Worker do? Medical Social Workers assist patients and their families with health-related problems and concerns. Medical Social Workers lead support group discussions, provide individual counseling, help patients determine appropriate health care and other health services, and provide support to patients with serious or chronic illnesses. In the hospital setting, Medical Social Workers play an important role in coordinating patient discharge planning. They assist patients and families, access in-home health care services, arrange for in-home medical equipment, provide for transportation, coordinate follow-up treatments, and refer patients to a wide variety of community social service agencies. Medical Social Workers are often also responsible for helping patients access financial assistance and health insurance coverage. What education, training, and experience must one have to function as a Medical Social Worker? The MSW program provides both fundamental social work knowledge and the opportunity to focus on a special area. Most Medical Social Workers have specific training in health and behavioral health conditions, health care policy, and systems of providing health care services. All MSW training includes a significant amount of time in a practicum experience known as a field placement. BSW students also must complete a practicum experience as part of their degree requirements. How and by whom is a Medical Social Worker supervised? The Medical Social Worker in a hospital or health clinic often works as part of a social work department. The Medical Social Worker is supervised by experienced Medical Social Workers who are supervisors or department directors. In some instances, Medical Social Workers may report to the administrator of a particular department within a hospital. In smaller community health agencies, and often in long-term care facilities, the Medical Social Worker may be the only social worker employed at the agency. In this instance, the Medical Social Worker is generally supervised by a health care administrator. What are the typical day-to-day activities of a Medical Social Worker? The typical day-to-day activities of a Medical Social Worker vary considerably depending on the health care setting. In the hospital, the Medical Social Worker has a critical role in the area of discharge planning. The Medical Social Worker does a complete psychosocial assessment on all patients referred for social work services by the physician. After the assessment has been completed, the Medical Social Worker works with the patient, his or her family, and other health professionals to develop a discharge plan. Due to the high number of patients for whom the Medical Social Worker is responsible and the tight deadlines required to avoid delays in discharge, medical social work is a highly demanding job. In addition, the Medical Social Worker often is confronted with complex cases involving patients with multiple psychosocial issues. A major role of the Medical Social Worker is to be an advocate for the patient and, at times, an advocate for broader social causes. Must a Medical Social Worker be licensed or certified to function in his or her role as part of the health care team? Each state has different licensing, certification, or registration requirements regarding social work. Although standards for licensing vary, a growing number of states are placing greater emphasis on communication skills, professional ethics, and sensitivity to issues of cultural diversity. Most states require a certain amount of supervised clinical experience for licensure of clinical social workers. Although not required in order to practice, many health care agencies require Medical Social Workers to be licensed, and most insurance providers require a Medical Social Worker to be licensed in order to reimburse for services. The National Association of Social Workers offers voluntary credentials. Credentials are particularly important for those in private practice; some health insurance providers require social workers to have them in order to be reimbursed for services. What types of patients would benefit from the care of a Medical Social Worker? Many, if not all, patients could benefit from the care

of a Medical Social Worker. In particular, individuals with chronic degenerative illnesses; the terminally ill; individuals with mental illness; transplant patients; homeless individuals; and individuals with multiple social, financial, emotional, or housing problems. How and when does a Medical Social Worker become involved in the care of a particular patient? In many health care settings, the physician requests social work services. In some settings, all patients receive social work services. Professional organizations for Medical Social Workers:

*As a Generalist Social Worker, you will also provide direct social work services to patients ranging from infancy to adulthood receiving care in the clinic.*

They can result in an onslaught of emotional, financial, and social needs. Social workers are adept at helping people meet these sorts of needs and so we find social workers in many locations where health services are delivered. They are known as medical and health care social workers. They may serve as case managers, patient navigators, and therapists. The largest percentage of healthcare social workers work in hospital settings. Some are in outpatient health centers. In hospital settings, social workers may handle discharge and also review new admissions for issues that need addressing. They may help patients locate various resources within their communities. In these settings, they may work any hour of the day or night. A hospital social worker may have a caseload of patients with widely varying needs. Some will need to weigh the risks and benefits of different healthcare options. Some will need help writing advanced directives or making end of life planning. Social workers in clinic settings coordinate care for patients who are expected to need a continuum of services. When children have complex health needs, the medical and health social worker may work with the whole family. In addition to handling the regular routines, a medical social worker needs to handle crises as they arrive. This may involve offering counseling or therapy. Social workers in medical settings sometimes treat or even diagnose psychological conditions. To gain actual first hand knowledge of the Medical Social Work field read: A BSW will have a more limited range of duties, for example, discharge planning. There are multiple specialties available. A concentration in clinical social work would be appropriate. Sometimes there is an opportunity to select health as a practice area. Learn more about this program. The MSW program helps prepare students to enter the general or clinical practice role in most states. Capella also offers an online Doctor of Social Work. All programs include a fieldwork component. A student with a health concentration could expect to spend time interning in a health facility. Some medical and health social workers earn certificates by taking a course sequence in a particular branch of health, for example, HIV and AIDS. The process includes taking one or more licensing exams through the Association of Social Work Boards. To achieve the highest level of licensing, a social worker must spend a period of time, usually two to three years, working under supervision. A supervisor will offer consultation and may ultimately have the responsibility of making a recommendation for licensure. Some medical and health social workers opt for additional voluntary certifications to show off their expertise in a particular specialty. This is awarded to professionals who have two years of relevant post-master supervised experience and have done 20 contact hours of continuing education. These provide additional details about variables that affect salary. Reported averages are slightly higher among NASW respondents.

## Chapter 4 : Become a Medical Social Worker

*Salary for Medical Social Worker (MSW) in the United States How much does a Medical Social Worker (MSW) earn in the United States? The average Medical Social Worker (MSW) salary in the United States is \$61, as of October 31, , but the range typically falls between \$55, and \$67,*

Because of the type of challenges they encounter and the fast pace of medical settings, medical social workers may find this field to be stressful and demanding. However, many medical social workers refer to the relationships they build with patients, families, and the medical team combined with the knowledge that they are helping individuals, as reasons that they entered and have stayed in the field. Ready to learn more on medical social work? Medical social workers typically combine a strong understanding of clinical social work practices and modalities such as psychosocial assessments, crisis interventions, and psychotherapy with knowledge of medical environments and protocols. While some inpatient medical social workers stay within one specific medical unit or department, many spread their time across several units. Allen also mentioned that, though medical social workers at John Muir Medical Center tend to focus on certain units, they also have a strong understanding of the needs of the hospital as a whole. Medical social workers for inpatient settings collaborate on a daily basis with many different teams and staff members. Beitch described the people on her interdisciplinary team with whom she interacts on a regular basis: Oftentimes, these patients grapple with very similar challenges that hospitalized patients do, and therefore require similar services such resource navigation guidance, counseling, and care coordination. Outpatient medical social workers can work at hospitals and medical centers, as well as specialty clinics. At times I would cover inpatient if we were short-staffed but my primary role was outpatient. It was similar to my current role at LPCHS as I had to prioritize my day, never knew what each day would hold, and there was a general quickness needed to accomplish the tasks necessary each day. Furthermore, some medical social work roles involve fulfilling or coordinating both inpatient and outpatient services on a regular basis. I enjoy the integration of acute illness with the opportunity to establish long-term relationships with patients and their families. These clinics differ from hospital settings in that they are serve individuals solely on an outpatient basis. Medical social workers in specialized outpatient clinics often fulfill as wide a range of responsibilities as their peers who work in larger hospital settings. My day never looks the same as the previous day. In her role, she provides education to children who have asthma and their families regarding how to detect, medicate, and manage this condition. She also conducts home visits to assess for environmental asthma triggers. I always have the child demonstrate to me how they use their medications and correct them if necessary. Finally, I do a home assessment in which I address any possible triggers in the home such as mold, dust, and pests i. Silva explained how she and her fellow social workers on the Asthma Start Program team incorporate social services into their delivery of health care services to disadvantaged asthmatic youth and their families. We try to address any social issues when we go out to the home such as screening for domestic violence to issues directly affecting the asthma such as mold and working with the landlords to correct any potential deficiencies. We are [also] very specialized. Upon completing this assessment, medical social workers communicate the information they have gathered to the larger medical team, which helps other team members i. Allen explained the importance of the psychosocial assessment: We are responsible for developing and implementing a plan of treatment to assist patients while they are in the hospital with many different psychosocial factors, such as social, emotional, financial, and environmental. We are an integral part of the treatment team, and we assess and provide treatment based on biopsychosocial information. In line with general social work practice, I am constantly assessing for safety and risk, access to resources, mental health, financial concerns, and available support networks. Grappling with a disease, injury, or other medical condition can be confusing and deeply stressful for patients and their loved ones. Medical social workers explain to patients the causes, effects, and progression of their illness. They also provide updates to patients and their families regarding any changes in their treatment plan. In describing her work with pediatric bone marrow transplant patients, Ms. With my Child Life Specialist colleagues, we prepare patients for certain procedures and teach them strategies to reduce anxiety, depression, and stress.

Types of psychotherapeutic methods that medical social workers may use to support patients and their families can include supportive psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness based stress reduction, and problem solving therapy. Beitch shares her approach to providing therapy to pediatric patients: My goal is to stay very patient-focused and draw on the person-in-environment model. If anxiety becomes a problem for a patient, I introduce stress-reduction techniques such as deep breathing and visualization. With parents, I encourage self-care and mindfulness activities to help with the stress and strain of hospital life. Mostly, I engage in active listening, provide emotional support and validation, and bear witness to the challenges and triumphs of our families. For more information about these and other therapeutic modalities, please see our [Guide to Clinical Social Work](#). [Back to Top](#) [Resource Connections and Navigation Services](#) Medical social workers help patients and their families understand the resources that are available to them within the hospital setting as well as in the community. Toledo elaborated on her work in connecting clients to the resources and services they need within and outside of Satellite Healthcare. I help with coordinating with primary care physicians in getting referrals to physical therapy or home health safety evaluations, referring them to CalFresh food stamps, food banks, homeless shelters, low-income housing, mental health providers, vocational rehabilitation programs, and kidney transplant wait lists and evaluations. Silva connects asthmatic children and their families to the supplies and medication they need during her home evaluations and follow-ups. Allen also elaborated on how medical social workers connect their clients with a variety of resources according to their individual situation and needs. As she often works with patients in the trauma unit, Ms. Allen must frequently connect them to resources to help them transition upon their discharge from the hospital. Many trauma patients are gang-affiliated, and the social worker works with those patients to help the patient plan for a safe discharge, connect them to victim of violence resources, and connect them to our Beyond Violence program which is an outpatient program that works with our patients to stop the cycle of violence. For patients and families who are coping with a terminal illness, medical social workers provide grief counseling, therapy, and referrals to additional mental health support. Barnhardt explained the different crisis intervention services she provides as a pediatric social worker at LPCHS: At times it is important to discuss death, dying, grief and bereavement. Specific to these individuals experiencing hardships, medical social workers help patients resolve or manage these issues in the moment and over time. In the ER, the main difference is that everything is crisis oriented, so you just have to focus on what needs to be done now, and what is the plan. Medical social workers are an integral part of the care coordination team in many medical environments. [Back to Top](#) [Challenges that Medical Social Workers Face](#) Medical social work is a challenging field, as social workers must balance the needs of many patients and also manage the demands of stakeholders on the larger medical team. Barnhardt noted how one challenge of her role at LPCHS is feeling pulled in many different directions at once. At times it is difficult to know and understand what each team is doing and what the plan of care for the patient is. It is important to attend rounds when able, arrange care conferences as needed and seek out the medical teams for updates and information when appropriate. It is also very important that I communicate any psychosocial concerns or issues with the medical team as these issues can affect the discharge plan. Particularly in acute care medical settings, the work can be emotionally taxing. Frustration with administrative and systematic barriers to patient care is also a challenge that some social workers voiced. Silva, who works with the Asthma Start Program notes challenges she has faced in helping her clients: In this case we are forced to turn to the city for further intervention. Allen shares what she believes to be the most challenging part of her role at the medical center: Stress brings on lots of headaches, back aches, and just overall exhaustion at the end of the day. Sometimes I just have to lay down and take an hour nap when I get home before I begin with my evening because I am just so emotionally and physically exhausted. I feel as if there is no real preparation for this, and I am still honestly trying to find my own way of coping with the stress of the job. Try to remember why you wanted to be a pediatric social worker in the hospital setting. Barnhardt said of her work as a pediatric social worker, for which she won a Gold Rose Award, which is an award granted to people in helping professions for excellence in service. I sometimes watch patients improve and go home, never to return again. And then there are the other times, where I have developed a wonderful working relationship with a family, having seen them through many obstacles, only to be at a place that is the end. This

is a very difficult time, but it means so much, to be there with a family through the last steps of hope, through the grief, the loss, and the time of bereavement, knowing that I made a difference, just from being there with them during that time. One of the rewarding experiences I have had at this job includes having success with getting my clients a medical home and health insurance so they remain healthy. This makes me proud and happy to be doing what I do. I intend on staying with the program for years to come. Allen decided to become a medical social worker after meeting a mother and her child who was in need of medication for a seizure disorder. The types of things she assisted with all appealed to my strengths and what I enjoy doing—helping people and working with kids. That is when I decided to pursue medical social work as a career and I have a very specific goal of one day working in the pediatrics oncology department of a hospital because I will be able to speak the same language as my patients and have a deeper understanding of what they are going through. Toledo similarly recommended that students actively seek field placements in medical settings: I also recommend volunteering with organizations related to the medical field. He has a history of type 2 diabetes and hypertension. Individuals interested in entering this field of social work should therefore research MSW programs that are CSWE-accredited and which provide classes on subjects that are relevant to medical environments. Classes that prospective medical social workers should consider taking include but are not limited to courses on clinical social work methods and therapeutic modalities such as motivational interviewing, strengths-based therapy, problem solving therapy, and substance abuse counseling, as well as courses on specific issues that medical social workers encounter on the job, such as death and dying, grief and bereavement counseling, crisis interventions, child abuse and neglect, and family dynamics. While some MSW programs provide concentrations specifically in health care or medical social work, students do not necessarily need to concentrate in medical social work during their MSW program to qualify for roles in health care settings. Beitch shares her advice on learning more about medical social work and yourself: It is very taxing. My colleagues are the ones who will support me day in and day out, year after year. I trust in them completely and feel so fortunate to be on a team with them. Therapy and supervision have been so completely necessary for me emotionally and professionally. And my friends from social work school are my saviors. Through sound academic preparation, internship and volunteer experiences, a strong support network, and consistent self-evaluation and self-care, medical social workers can maintain resilience and energy when tackling the daily challenges of this deeply necessary field of work.

## Chapter 5 : Medical Social Work | Mercy Health

*Medical social work is a stressful role, in general, and the social worker is often expected to be the glue that keeps the discharge plan together (and, often the healthcare team). That's a big expectation and a role only for the most "together" and mature practitioners.*

They can help patients and family members develop coping strategies, assess patient needs, assist in the development of treatment plans and provide emotional and mental assessments on the patient. Medical Social Workers can also offer bereavement counseling, assist with patient discharge and handle the arrangement of in-home care services. Medical Social Workers can be employed in hospitals, hospices, long-term care facilities, nursing homes and assisted living centers. Employment in this field is expected to grow 19 percent over the decade, as reported by the U. Bureau of Labor Statistics. An aging population and improvements in healthcare treatments and services are among the chief contributors to this projected job growth rate. Medical Social Worker Duties and Responsibilities A Medical Social Worker is responsible for handling several tasks in order to provide the best service to patients. We have reviewed several job listings and found the following among the core Medical Social Worker duties and responsibilities. Provide Support to Patients The main role of a Medical Social Worker is to help patients understand, cope with and treat their condition. To this end, Medical Social Workers will counsel patients about their illness or disease, participate in treatment plan development, arrange for in-home care personnel and equipment and assist in the scheduling of follow-up visits. They will also ensure that patients are adhering to treatment plan and medical recommendations. Educate and Counsel Families It is just as important to provide support to families of patients, and Medical Social Workers are involved in helping families understand the illness or condition that a patient has been diagnosed with and offer counseling to reduce stress and cope with the needs of the patient. Medical Social Workers will assist in all decision making processes relating to the care of the patient and make referrals as needed. They also offer grief counseling services to families. Assist in Obtaining Various Healthcare Services A Medical Social Worker is typically involved in helping patients work with health insurance companies, community health agencies, transportation services and financial assistance programs. They will help to determine what benefits patients are eligible for and assist in filling out necessary paperwork, such as health insurance forms. Medical Social Worker Skills Strong oral and written communication, organizational and problem solving skills are essential for Medical Social Workers. They should be detail- and goal-oriented individuals who possess the ability to work independently and also collaborate with various healthcare representatives and agencies. In addition to these general skills, a Medical Social Worker could be expected by potential employers to possess the following skills. Based on job listings we looked at, employers want Medical Social Workers with these core skills. If you want to work as a Medical Social Worker, focus on the following. Communicating with doctors, nurses, home health companies and other healthcare personnel and agencies Coordinating healthcare services Understanding various medical conditions and terminology Evaluating the mental, emotional and physical status of patients Providing bereavement counseling services to families Possessing Social Worker state licensure Advanced skills: While most employers did not require the following skills, multiple job listings included them as preferred. Add these to your Medical Social Worker toolbox and broaden your career options. Understand federal, state and local healthcare standards and regulations Proficiency in basic computer applications, such as Microsoft Office applications Medical Social Worker Resources It is beneficial to conduct additional research if you are considering a career as a Medical Social Worker. Below, we have provided links to online and print resources about this career. On the Web Social Work Today – An online publication offering articles for all types of social workers, including those working in health care and mental health. Social Work Career – A website offering blogs in various areas of social work, including healthcare. Blog topics address therapeutic approaches, emotions and mental health. CSWA provides online articles, legislative news and clinical information. Offers an online journal, conferences, a mentorship program and continuing education opportunities. NASW has professional development opportunities, credential information, online tools and access to online and print publications that

are useful to all types of social workers, including Medical Social Workers. Books Hospital Social Work: The Interface of Medicine and Caring 1st Edition â€” Crafted from interviews with over Medical Social Workers, this book offers an insight into the daily functions and roles of this career. Where to Start and What to Ask: An Assessment Handbook 1st Edition â€” Written by an experienced Medical Social Worker, this book discusses tools and approaches to assessing patients for healthcare social work purposes. Medical Social Worker Resume Help Explore these related job titles from our database of hundreds of thousands of expert-approved resume samples:

*Medical Social Work Jobs. The job outlook for medial social workers is very good, with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicting a 19 percent gain in employment between and , which is a much higher rate than average for all occupations.*

They are responsible for interviewing patients and relatives to form a better medical history. They perform the initial contact and complete a background screening before further testing. They document each client visit and report their progress to other medical professionals. Most of the time, medical social workers provide effective emotional, financial, and medical advice when required. One of their main responsibilities is to appropriately refer clients to qualified specialist and other professionals on a regular basis. They also arrange transportation options for patients to and from appointments. Medical social workers are facilitators in support group, provide counseling advice, and help integrate skills into everyday life. They administer new programs, and attend staff meetings They must respect patient confidentiality by following local, state, and federal mandates. Medical social workers regularly promote health care initiatives and monitor participation, as well as share vital information with other social workers to improve service reliability. They provide crucial information to clients, carefully explain alternatives in treatment, and answer technical questions when possible. They also act as a liaison between medical staff and patients. Medical social workers should be proficient with the use of basic computer and email software, and they should possess strong interpersonal skills. Previous experience in a similar position can be helpful. Negotiate with payers, outreach, family, and third party groups to safeguard patients. Communicate with patients and rehabilitation or care programs to ensure appropriate actions are taken. Conduct psychosocial evaluations and advise clinicians on social work matters. Others at the bottom of the scale for this job include Gentiva Health Services, Inc. Plan your career path. Drag job titles to investigate a particular path and click on a link to see where particular career can lead. Medical Social Workers report using a deep pool of skills on the job. Most notably, skills in Dialysis, Geriatrics, Assessment, and Palliative Care are correlated to pay that is above average, with boosts in pay of 12 percent. Skills that are correlated to lower pay, on the other hand, include Crisis intervention. Those proficient in Case Management are, more often than not, also skilled in Hospice. Average total compensation includes tips, bonus, and overtime pay. Pay Difference by Location.

Chapter 7 : What is Medical Social Work? | [blog.quintoapp.com](http://blog.quintoapp.com)

*In this instance, medical social workers count as healthcare social workers and according to the BLS, as of May , the average annual salary of a medical social worker was \$53, with the top 10 percent of child social workers earning \$76, Those that worked in specialty hospitals earned a annual average salary of \$66,*

The medical world is a fast-paced, complex, and intimidating place for most people. Hospital stays are often scary, provoking extreme stress about serious health problems and possible financial ruin. Medical social workers relieve some of that tension for patients by providing information and resources. As executors of post-hospitalization plans for patients, medical social workers ensure that follow-up treatments, such as physical therapy, are taken care of. In summary, all the details that might overwhelm a patient are taken care of by his or her medical social worker. Medical social workers take the difficulties out of the health care system for patients, providing welcome help and advice for those recovering from the trauma of a hospital stay. Often this includes interviews with family members to determine the nature of available home care or other home-related considerations such as the delivery of oxygen. This might include placement in a therapeutic or rehabilitation center for a specified period of time. Or, it might require the establishment of basic living resources such as help with cooking and chores in the home, home nurses, or transportation to a counseling center to counter post-hospitalization depression or other psychological issues. These kinds of arrangements are particularly important for the elderly or those for whom post-hospital treatment is essential.

**Where do Medical Social Workers Work?** Hospitals, clinics and therapeutic facilities where post-hospital interventions are common employ the largest number of medical social workers on a regular basis. They perform much of the administrative work and are often the human interface that patients depend on when entering the medical system. Facilities with underprivileged or predominantly immigrant patient populations also need medical social workers. These facilities hire those fluent in another language, for example, or who have specialized skills for handling difficult social conditions requiring culturally sensitive treatment.

**Medical Social Workers are Members of Therapeutic Teams** Medical social workers are typically part of an interdisciplinary medical team. As the team members closest to patients, social workers are responsible for maintaining interactive relationships with patients, and communicating their ongoing conditions to team members. Medical social workers spend their days working on their assigned patient loads, consulting with nurses and physicians about patient care, conferring with patients, planning discharges and other treatment arrangements, and dealing with various crises that arise. All this requires a substantial knowledge of medical terminology, diagnostic and assessment procedures, and the ability to work positively and effectively with health care providers as well as patients. Because they typically work with people in medical crises, medical social workers need to have exceptional communication skills. To do this, they must be knowledgeable about medical diagnoses and treatment requirements.

**Education and Counseling** Medical social workers must be adept at translating medical jargon into terminology that the average patient will understand. Since it is their job to provide patients with the medical information they need to recover, medical social workers depend not only on their administrative skills, but also on their ability to anticipate and express the concerns of their patients. For example, illnesses such as heart disease or diabetes often require lifelong medications, specific diets, and regular monitoring. They teach patients and family members the importance of administering time-sensitive statin drugs, conduct frequent glucose testing, or give insulin shots, helping everyone to understand the importance of medical compliance. If a patient begins exhibiting poor mental health, such as depression or anger, medical social workers contact the appropriate team members and arrange for a mental health evaluation. Patient attitude is pivotal to recovery, and social workers understand that the stress of illness and treatments can undermine recovery. Counseling is a form of education that helps patients cope with the trauma of illnesses and therapies such as chemotherapy and radiation. Medical social workers counsel patients, providing therapeutic support as they face serious medical conditions, limitations in their mobility, and adjustments in their living conditions. Helping patients work through their grief and fear of health-related life transitions relieves stress and anxiety. Social workers also facilitate therapeutic support groups for patients

struggling with serious illnesses. The mental health benefits of bonding with people who are going through the same problems enable patients to gain better perspectives on personal outcomes. Crisis intervention is another area of social work specialization, a specialization to help trauma victims. Individuals who have experienced child abuse, rape, domestic violence, or who are suicidal, find comforting, healthy support and therapeutic advice in short-term and long-term counseling services offered by medical social workers. They help individuals find shelters, safehouses, rehabilitation facilities, financial aid, and mental health services, as well as provide practical advice. Medical social workers are, in all instances, advocates for their patients. They also ensure that patient rights are respected and addressed. In serving both patients and the medical team, medical social workers quickly learn to spot potential problems and expediently find solutions. The skills of both diplomacy and problem-solving makes medical social workers invaluable team players. Find schools offering degree programs in social work to get started. In addition, all states have licensure regulations that require applicants to have completed specific levels of schooling as well as many hours of supervised fieldwork. To know more refer to state licensing requirements for social workers. In preparation for a career as a medical social worker, a determined student should find a volunteer or entry-level position in a health-related facility. Typically, specialized hospitals appear to offer slightly better salaries than smaller medical facilities or government agencies.

**Chapter 8 : Medical and Health Social Workers | How to Become a Medical Social Worker**

*What Do Medical Social Workers Do? If you have achieved Master of Social Work (MSW) from a CSWE-accredited program and are interested in pursuing a career path that enables you to work within the thriving healthcare industry, it is highly recommended that you consider becoming a medical social worker.*

Today, the medical and healthcare system in this country can be utterly overwhelming and confusing for many people, not to mention extraordinarily expensive. Serious illnesses and injuries are sometimes even enough to devastate and ruin some patients for years. Medical social workers, however, are there to help patients navigate the world of healthcare. These social workers can help individuals do everything from find medical care to help pay for medical care to recover from an illness or injury. This might include offering advice, acting as a patient advocate, or referring a patient to facilities or programs. In general, medical social workers work with all types of patients. Individuals that may benefit from the help of medical social workers might be any age and from all walks of life. If you choose to start a medical social work career, you will generally work closely with children and their parents, adults, and the elderly. You might also work with poverty-stricken patients, along with those with average to high incomes as well. In addition, you should also be able to communicate effectively with patients, families, doctors, nurses, and healthcare facility bureaucrats. Organizational skills, patience, and an understanding disposition are also excellent traits to have when pursuing a medical social worker career. The medical and healthcare world can be confusing and intimidating, both emotionally and financially. In fact, some individuals in need of healthcare may even avoid going to the doctor or the hospital purely for these reasons. Leaving serious injuries or illnesses untreated is often dangerous, and can even be fatal at times. In short, a medical social worker can help simplify the medical world for patients and their families. A career in medical social work also often involves informing patients of their rights. Assessing the needs of a patient is usually the first step that a medical social worker will take. This might involve interviewing the patient, his family, and his doctors. The social worker will also answer any questions and address any concerns that a patient and his family may have. Besides offering advice and support, a medical social worker will also help patients overcome any obstacles or hurdles regarding their medical treatment. Financial issues are some of the most common issues that medical social workers are faced with each day. These social workers will often be charged with attempting to ease the financial burdens of medical care. They will often work with patients with inadequate or non-existent health insurance. In these cases, a social worker might help patients figure out how to pay for medical treatments, by helping them apply for assistance programs or setting up payment arrangements. Adequate care and understanding medical caregivers are also concerns that many patients may have during treatment. A medical social worker can help patients find the proper care, by referring them to medical facilities and specialists that cater to their needs. A medical social worker may be responsible to coordinate post-treatment resources, if a patient needs additional help at home because of his medical condition. For instance, he might help set up necessary services, such as home healthcare services or assisted living services. Some medical social workers might also be able to find employment in government offices as well.

*The Medical Social Worker is supervised by experienced Medical Social Workers who are supervisors or department directors. In hospitals and larger health care facilities, the director of the social work department is usually a member of the medical center's administrative team.*

Medical social workers specialize in public health, geriatric, palliative, and inpatient medical or mental health care. They work in hospitals or other specialized medical settings like nursing homes, rehabilitative care centers, or related home-care services. Some medical social workers are very specialized. Medical social workers often collaborate with other medical professionals such as doctors, nurses, discharge coordinators, administrative staff and physical therapists as part of an interdisciplinary team. They are primarily involved in preparing patients for life after leaving a residential setting and providing support to clients and family members in the forms of discharge planning, psychosocial counseling, grief counseling, case management, and referrals. Certain issues addressed by medical social workers include terminal illness, catastrophic disability, end of life decisions, homelessness, independent living resources, medication adherence and management, or suicidality. Do you enjoy working with a variety of helping professionals? You might enjoy the variety of colleagues you would experience in medical social work. Are you squeamish in medically graphic situations? If the sight of an IV needle or a bedpan sends you running for the hills, your discomfort in these situations may impact your ability to build rapport with these clients and their families. How assertive are you? You must make tough decisions with confidence in your ethics, but sometimes in conflict with patient or family wishes, especially when recommending a patient is ready for discharge. How are your organizational and time management skills? Medical social workers are extremely busy. If your strengths include remaining calm during biomedical or psychiatric crisis situations, grief and loss counseling, or working with older adults, you might find that medical social work is exactly where you belong. As this subfield evolves, medical social workers will likely increase in demand. In particular, there will be more demand for medical social workers who specialize in geriatrics as Americans continue to live longer. If mental health parity continues to trend, we can expect to see more hospitals hiring psychiatric social workers. However, as your years of experience increase, you can expect a significant jump in salary, particularly if you take on a supervisory role. What Are the Requirements? This is not only due to the clinical knowledge needed for the role, but also because insurance companies may require masters-level professionals for billing purposes. Sponsored Listing Featured Programs: Learn how to ethically integrate faith and social work practice in as few as 12 months. GRE scores are not required. Four specialized courses of study are offered as well as an Individualized Course of Study. The GRE is not required to apply. Capella also offers an online Doctor of Social Work. Licensure requirements vary depending on the specific job as well as your state. Continuing education plays a significant role in the lives of medical social workers, as they must stay up-to-date with the constantly evolving research found in a medical setting. A Day in the Life of an Inpatient Psychiatric Social Worker Your day starts with a debriefing through which you will be updated on which patients arrived, which patients left, who is considered at highest risk, and what crises arose while you were away. Some assessments take place over several meetings because patients who are involuntarily committed may not be the most forthcoming. Throughout the day you might conduct group sessions where you would help patients understand why they are in treatment and form supportive connections during their stay. Individual counseling is a huge part of helping patients prepare for life after discharge. This also includes crisis intervention, as clients struggle to accept their placement or diagnoses and may express suicidal thoughts. Case management paperwork will take up much of your free time throughout the day. Documentation is a major responsibility and your day would conclude with going over paperwork to ensure all information is accurate for the social worker taking over the next shift. Best of the Blog.