

Future Trends in Health Care Social Work

Health care social workers are creating many new practices and approaches to meet the changing contexts and realities of health care in the 21st century. New medical technologies, increasing numbers of elderly persons, co-morbidity of physical health, mental health, alcohol and drug addictions, shortened length of hospital stays, preference for community-based care and lack of universal health insurance all contribute to the current health care challenges. Health care promises to be an exciting and challenging area of social work practice in the years to come.



Admission to the Social Work Program

Completion of a minimum of 36 semester hours prior to admission

- 2.5 cumulative GPA at time of admission
- Grade of "B" or better in SOWK 210-Introduction to Social Work
- Completion of the following prerequisite courses with grades of C or better. These courses may be in progress at time of application:
 - SOCL 125—Introduction to Sociology
 - POSC 121—American Government
 - BIOL 203—Human Biology for Social Sciences (2 semesters of anatomy and physiology may be substituted)
 - PSYC 171 General Psychology
 - SOWK 240—Introduction to Research Writing
 - SOWK 275—Introduction to Professional Practice



Social Work Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Viterbo University Social Work Program is to prepare baccalaureate students for entry level generalist social work practice. In an atmosphere of integrity and respect, students will develop professional knowledge, values, and skills for service provision and social change. The program is guided by the Franciscan values of human dignity, social justice, strengths of diverse populations, and respect for disenfranchised members of our global society.



For further information, contact:



Jennie Anderson-Meger
Social Work Program Director
Viterbo University
900 Viterbo Dr
La Crosse, WI 54601
(608) 796-3722
jimeger@viterbo.edu

Website: <http://www.viterbo.edu/socialwork>

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Social Work in Health Care



Do you want to improve people's lives?

Are you interested in working in a health care setting?

Do you want a professional degree?

Social work may be the major for you!



Social Work in Health Care Settings

Health care is a specialized area of social work practice concerned with a person's adjustment to changes in health and the impact this has on a person's life and social network. Health care social workers provide services across the continuum of care and in various settings. They are present in public health, acute, outpatient, residential, chronic care and home care settings providing a range of services including health education, crisis intervention, supportive counseling, case management, alcohol and drug treatment, and mental health services. Social workers work collaboratively with other members of the health care team. Social work in health care is fast paced and challenging.

Placements of Viterbo Social Work Graduates in Health Care

*Cancer Center
Hospice
Emergency Room
Obstetrics and Pediatrics
Hospital Based Domestic Violence
Specialist
Inpatient General Medicine
Inpatient Behavioral Health
Case Manager for the AIDS Resource Center
Respite Care
Case Manager for Individuals With Severe
and Persistent Mental Illness
Care and Rehabilitation Centers
Veterans Administration
Residential Treatment for AODA
Residential Treatment for Individuals
with Chronic Mental Illness
Home Health*

Skills for Health Care Social Work

The health care social worker is the essential link between the patient, the health care facility (whether hospital, clinic, health department, nursing home, treatment facility, or home care setting), and the community and its resources. Social workers utilize a strengths perspective that recognizes the challenge of illness and loss while uplifting patient and family strengths, empowerment and wellness. Health care social workers have the privilege of interacting with patients and their families at times of enormous vulnerability. Times of medical crisis create windows of opportunity for competent and compassionate social work leaders.



Essential areas of knowledge and understanding for health care social workers include:

- comprehensive, culturally competent assessment and patient-focused intervention/treatment planning
- community resources
- understanding of physiological elements of illness and physical and psychiatric disability
- understanding of substance abuse, mental illness and trauma
- understanding of complex psychological and spiritual needs of patients and families
- ethical and legal questions and dilemmas
- laws, regulations, and policies affecting access to health care
- evidence-based practices and social work research in health care
- needs of special populations
- issues of disparities and oppression across cultures and economic groups in gaining access to and funding for health care
- patient and family advocacy
- crisis intervention, case management, discharge planning

Employment Outlook

The U.S. Department of Labor predicts that employment of social workers is expected to increase by 19 percent during the 2012-2022 decade, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. Social workers with expertise in mental health, substance abuse and gerontology will experience strong demand. Median annual earnings for healthcare social workers in May 2012 was \$49,830.

Education and Credentialing

A bachelor's degree in social work is the minimum requirement for a social work position in health care. A master's degree in social work (MSW) is required in many health care settings and also for work as a clinical social worker or therapist. All states have credentialing requirements regarding social work practice and the use of professional titles. Social workers should be emotionally mature, objective, and sensitive to people and the challenges they face. They must be able to handle responsibility, work independently, and maintain good working relationships with clients and coworkers.

You too can make a difference!

