HOSPICE SOCIAL WORK:  
Linking Policy, Practice and Research

The Social Work Policy Institute (SWPI) is pleased to release the report Hospice Social Work: Linking Policy, Practice and Research, which is the result of a think tank symposium convened in March 2010, in partnership with the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO). For the complete report visit SocialWorkPolicy.org.

SYMPOSIUM GOALS
- To promote high quality psychosocial care in hospice
- To explore social work’s contribution to building comprehensive end-of-life care
- To identify research on social workers’ roles and intervention practices
- To understand hospice regulations and the regulatory development process
- To engage key stakeholders in dialogue and action planning

FRAMING THE ISSUES
- Comprehensive Community-Based End-of-Life Care – Social Work Contributions
- Social Work’s Role in Hospice – An Overview of Research
- Promoting High Quality Psychosocial Care – Regulations and Quality Measures

ACTION AGENDA HIGHLIGHTS
To Enhance Social Work’s Contribution to Quality Hospice Care
- Value and promote hospice social work credentials, competitive salaries, social work supervision, peer support and professional development opportunities
- Promote social work role on interdisciplinary team (IDT), including enhanced IDT research and training
- Engage patients and family members in care planning
- Enhance relationships and information exchange between the social work community and CMS on social work’s contribution to hospice care and quality
- Promote culturally-competent hospice care and outreach to diverse populations at end of life
- Ensure social work input into quality improvement and assessment strategies
- Strengthen attention to end of life and palliative care in the social work curriculum
- Enhance linkages between hospice social workers and other health care social workers

To Strengthen Research-Policy-Practice Bridges
- Build social work research on end-of-life care supported by NIH and AHRQ
- Create visible practice and policy relevant dissemination tools for research findings
- Ensure practice relevant and practitioner, consumer and family engaged research
- Enhance involvement of social workers in interdisciplinary EOL research
- Pursue systematic reviews of hospice psychosocial research
- Advocate for increased funding for EOL research
- Promote partnerships among national and local social work and hospice entities

SOCIAL WORK’S ROLE IN END-OF-LIFE CARE
- Plan for adaptation to a life-threatening condition
- Ensure adequate social support systems and assistance with financial needs
- Facilitate communication and planning among family members and loved ones
- Promote collaborative care with the hospice or palliative care team
- Counseling
- Discharge planning
- Care management
- Continuity of care during and after patient’s death
- Referral to community resources
- Crisis intervention
- Advocacy
- Patient and family education

ABOUT THE SOCIAL WORK POLICY INSTITUTE

The Social Work Policy Institute was established in 2009 and is a division of the NASW Foundation. Its mission is:

• To strengthen social work’s voice in public policy deliberations.
• To inform policy-makers through the collection and dissemination of information on social work effectiveness.
• To create a forum to examine current and future issues in health care and social service delivery.

Social Work Policy Institute • NASW Foundation
Director: Joan Levy Zlotnik, PhD, ACSW
750 First Street NE, Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20002-4241
SocialWorkPolicy.org • swpi@naswdc.org • 202.336.8393

REFERENCES


CMS HOSPICE CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

§ 418.114 Personnel qualifications (b) Standard: Personnel qualifications for certain disciplines

3. Social worker-
• MSW with one year experience; or
• Bachelor’s in social work, psychology, sociology, or other related field AND one year experience AND supervised by MSW; or
• Bachelor’s in social work AND employed by hospice before the effective date of the final rule (December 2, 2008). (CMS, 2008, p. 32218)