

## STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

**Class Title: Human Services Social Worker**

**Class Code: 051546**

**Pay Grade: GI**

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### **A. Purpose:**

Assesses and provides direct social services to meet the needs of patients or residents by serving as the direct link between the patient/resident, the facility, families and/or guardians, and community based private and public resources.

### **B. Distinguishing Feature:**

Human Services Social Worker provides social services such as discharge planning, family contacts, admissions, processing, assessment of needs, and input on treatments as a member of the treatment team.

Psychiatric Social Workers provide therapeutic psychotherapy counseling treatments and are responsible for administering the treatment established by the treatment team.

### **C. Functions:**

*(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)*

1. Develops and executes a safe and effective discharge plan that is tailored to the individualized needs of each patient to support a successful transition to the community.
  - a. Obtains financial, vocational, legal, social, and recreational resources.
  - b. Assists in making decisions regarding level of care a patient will discharge in order to meet the patient's needs.
  - c. Makes referrals for placement purposes within and outside the facility, this could include out of state placement.
  - d. Provides education on community resources for patients.
  - e. Follows up on discharged patients or patients on leave.
  - f. Contacts and/or visits potential placement facilities to determine whether sufficient resources are available at that location to accommodate the patient.
2. Completes a psychosocial assessment with the patient or resident to identify strengths, challenges, and clinical needs. Shares findings with other members of the treatment team to determine effective treatment and therapies and to identify the patient's needs and goals.
  - a. Interviews the patient and social supports.
  - b. Contacts mental health centers and other agencies involved with the patient.
  - c. Assesses the patient's needs and collaborates with a treatment team to develop an effective therapeutic treatment.
  - d. Communicates with the families of patients through visitations, over the telephone, or by mail.
3. Consults with patient's social supports and/or guardian to inform them of the patient's progress and to promote the patient's best interests to ensure that the family and/or guardian maintain a therapeutic role in the patient's treatment.

4. Establishes and maintains individual patient records to ensure accurate, up-to-date account of activities for reference purposes.
5. Serves as the primary point of contact for communication with family members, attorneys, community mental health and substance use disorder treatment providers, probation and parole, medical providers, and others as needed.
6. Secures funding for resources and services such as indigent medications to provide support to patients as they discharge to the community.
7. Obtains and disseminates pre-admission data concerning the incoming patient to the treatment team and conducts pre-admission staffings to prepare the treatment team for the arrival of the patient.
8. Works closely with other state entities as appropriate to support the patient.
9. Performs other work as assigned.

**D. Reporting Relationships:**

Typically, this position does not supervise, but may provide direction or training to direct care staff.

**E. Challenges and Problems:**

Challenges include finding appropriate placements for patients upon discharge because of the limited available resources.

Typical problems include getting accurate information from unreliable or unwilling patients and family members; family dissatisfaction with the patient care or families who resist discharge; working with challenging behaviors; encourage voluntary patients to complete treatments; and locating resources, to fulfill a patient's need.

**F. Decision-making Authority:**

Decisions include prioritizing workload to complete assignments in a timely manner; content of discharge plans; need for family contact; how to obtain finances, clothing, and health care; relevant social history information; patient assessments; appropriate discharge facilities; and impact at treatment team meetings.

Decisions referred include need for medical testing; relevant training; involuntary commitment procedures; and the need of staff meetings.

**G. Contact with Others:**

Contact with patients' families and/or guardians to determine patient needs and treatment team members to discuss treatments and progress; contact with adjustment training centers, nursing homes, and transitional centers for placement purposes and social

services, legal services, social security, and support services to obtain patient resources; and frequent contact with mental health centers to exchange information.

#### **H. Working Conditions:**

Typically works in an office environment, but also spends a significant amount of time on patient unit areas.

#### **I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

Knowledge of:

- ethical standards, principles, and practices of social work, counseling, and human behavior;
- current social, economic, and health trends and services, and the ability to adapt trends to practical program applications and link clients with services needed;
- interviewing and other information gathering techniques;
- assessment principles and techniques;
- available community resources;
- record keeping.

Ability to:

- remain calm with difficult patients and individuals;
- maintain contact with clients, patients, relatives, physicians, social agencies, community officials, and other administrative officials;
- create meaningful, concise, and accurate reports and correspondence;
- establish and maintain effective working relationships with diverse populations;
- communicate effectively with a wide variety of people;
- assess social service needs, complete psychosocial assessments and social histories, and identify and obtain programs or services sufficient to meet these needs;
- obtain reliable information.