



# Medical Social Worker

## Education

Medical social workers enter the field with a master's degree (MSW or MSS) which is the minimal educational requirement at most teaching hospitals. Some social workers enter with an entry level bachelor's degree (BSW) which may be more appropriate at community hospitals.

## Certifications

Medical social workers pass state licensing examination (LSW). Licensure requirements and exams vary from state to state. Some medical social workers may choose to take a state clinical social work exam which is a separate state license (LCSW).

## Roles and Functions

Medical social workers assess the psychosocial functioning of patients and families and intervene as necessary. Interventions include community

resource referral, providing psychotherapy, supportive counseling, grief counseling and helping patients to explore various support systems. Medical social workers typically work on an interdisciplinary team with other health care professionals.

The role of the medical social worker includes assessment of patients with complex social problems such as lack of health insurance coverage, multiple chronic medical and psychiatric conditions, unemployment, substance abuse issues, adjustment to a new diagnosis and change in functional status. Historically social workers have been committed to working with underserved populations. The medical social worker has a critical role in discharge planning working to ensure that all the community and home services are in place facilitating a timely discharge.

## Practice settings

Medical social workers work with individuals of all ages in a variety of practice settings. These include (but are not limited to) hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, long term care facilities, outpatient medical settings, dialysis units, cancer centers and hospice programs.

No social work program at TJU