SOCIAL WORK MONTH 2024

VALUE OF SOCIAL WORK IN HEALTH CARE

Every day across the United States, social workers work with patients and families to understand what matters most to them and then draw on the knowledge, values, and skills of their profession to improve people's care journeys. This may look like improving access to medication, connecting to employment resources, addressing caregiver burnout, or any other action that supports a patient's overall wellbeing. Clinical social workers (CSWs) are specifically trained to assess, diagnose, and treat mental and behavioral health conditions, which can both affect and develop from a physical health diagnosis.

COALITION FOR SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH

Established in 2013, CSWH is a collective dedicated to elevating and expanding social work's impact in improving health and healthcare. The Coalition engages in policy advocacy, research, and education through the participation of professional associations, practice and academic leaders, and allies.

INTEGRATING SOCIAL WORKERS ACROSS HEALTH CARE SETTINGS ACT

The *Integrating Social Workers Across Health Care Settings Act,* H.R. 4638 would authorize CSWs to bill Medicare Part B for the services they are already authorized to perform within their existing state scope of practice. H.R. 4638 supports current and future CSWs as the legislation would bring Medicare up to pace with the landscape of CSW services and would ensure CSWs are not excluded from future applicable codes.

BARRIERS TO BETTER CARE

While social workers are core members of care teams, they are not compensated the same as other allied health professionals under current Medicare statutory language. CSWs can only bill Medicare for the direct services they offer as mental health providers, even though their existing scope of practice encompasses so much more. Although a recent regulatory change has opened billing for Health Behavior Assessment and Intervention (HBAI), Advance Care Planning (ACP) and related care coordination codes are further applicable to the standard care performed by CSWs and are not included in federal statute. Without proper Medicare reimbursement, the CSW workforce cannot meet the needs of America's elderly patient populations despite having the specialized knowledge to provide such care.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SOCIAL WORK'S ROLE, EXPERTISE, AND VALUE IN IMPROVING OUR NATION'S HEALTH, VISIT WWW.CHASCI.ORG/CSWH.
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