Social Work in the U.S. Army

History

Social Workers (SW) were first commissioned as officers in the U.S. Army in July 1945, although SWs assisted Soldiers during both World War I and II as American Red Cross employees. Today, military and civilian SWs serve their country and the Army in multiple settings spanning the spectrum of clinical, administrative and research SW skills.

Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW/equivalent) serve as officers, both in the Active Component (AC) (i.e. full-time) and in the Reserve Components: Army Reserve and Guard (i.e. part-time while holding other civilian employment). The Army's civilian and contract LCSWs are valued members of our Behavioral Health (BH) team. Skilled SW professionals are encouraged to explore employment opportunities.

Select Clinical Practice Areas

- Combat Operational Stress Control Detachments and Brigade Combat Teams: Working on the battlefield and on installations to address stress related issues and brief counseling needs.
- Army Family Advocacy Program (FAP): Providing domestic abuse assessments and treatment to Solders and their Families.
- Army Substance Abuse Program (ASAP): Assessing and treating substance abuse of Soldiers (advanced substance abuse credentials are required).
- Warrior Transition Units (WTU): Working with Wounded, Ill and Injured Soldiers, known as Warriors in Transition (WT), and their Families, to address the WT's level of risk, behavioral healthcare needs, adjustment to illness and reintegration to Army or civilian life.
- BH Care: Performing BH treatment both in clinics and in-patient settings for Soldiers and Family members.
- Medical Social Work in Military Hospitals: Addressing adjustment to illness issues and coordinating discharge planning needs.
- Exceptional Family Member Program Clinics (EFMP): Working with special needs children and their Families.
- BH Training: Instructing Military staff in BH topics and developing new BH-related training at the Army Medical Department Center and School (AMEDDC&S).

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Select Administrative/Research Practice Areas

SWs are establishing Army-wide BH policies and addressing the administration of BH practices at the U.S. Army Medical Command. SWs also establish policies and manage programs addressing Family and Soldier support needs at the Army's Installation Management Command.

Research Opportunities exist at the U.S. Army Public Health Command (Provisional), the Uniformed University of the Health Sciences and at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

Training/Continuing Education

Master of Social Work (MSW) degree program: The AMEDDC&S and Fayetteville State University established a partnership in 2008 to offer an accelerated Masters of SW degree. Army officers, enlisted Soldiers and Army civilians may apply for admission to this very competitive program; details are available at www.uncfsu.edu/sw/fortsam/fortsam.htm.

Ph.D. / Doctorate of SW Opportunities:

- An advanced Clinical Practice Fellowship in Child & Family Practice at Walter Reed Army Medical Center is offered competitively to Active Component (AC) SWs. http://www.wramc.army.mil/PATIENTS/HEALTHCARE/SOCIAL/FS/Pages/default.aspx
- Long Term Health Education Training (LTHET): AC SWs may be selected competitively to attend any public university of their choice offering a PhD in SW in a duty (paid) status.

Active and Reserve component SWs and Army civilian SW employees may be funded to participate in military and civilian Continuing Education (CE) courses and conferences in a duty status.

Resources

Active Army / Army Reserves:
http://www.goarmy.com/amedd/m_service/behavioral_sciences.jsp

Army National Guard:
http://www.nationalguard.com/explore/medical/servicecorps.php

Civilian Social Work:
http://acpol.army.mil/employment/

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