

The Spotlight

Spotlighting healthcare-related educational topics that matter to you

The Patient Education and Empowerment Department creates resources that address a range of topics from medical debt to insurance access and disability benefits. The resources we produce are reflective of real-world experiences that meet the needs of the patients PAF serves.



You asked & we listened. Using questions our case managers get asked and analyzing our website keyword searches each month, we address what patients want to know now.

Honoring Social Workers in the Healthcare Field

March marks National Social Work Month! This month, take time to thank a social worker and learn more about the countless positive contributions of the profession, including in most healthcare settings!

Social workers are found across the healthcare system and are vital team members in hospitals, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and other long-term institutions.



Medical social workers often work in partnership with other medical professionals such as doctors, nurses, chaplains, dietary staff, physical, occupational, and speech therapists, and administrative staff as part of an interdisciplinary team.

Some medical social workers are highly specialized while others serve a larger range of patients with ongoing medical issues. Medical social workers support patients and their loved ones in some of

their most vulnerable moments. They can be a listening ear when someone is trying to cope with an illness or injury. They can be there to comfort patients in pain or with the family through grief. Many medical social workers feel that assisting patients, caregivers, and families as they navigate difficult situations and decisions is one of the most rewarding parts of the job. Social workers can provide not only emotional and mental support but tangible support as well. Many act as discharge planners, helping patients set up home health services, medical equipment, or meal delivery services as they leave the hospital or facility, setting them up for success upon returning home.

Medical social workers assist patients in understanding their condition and obtaining the resources they need to meet their emotional and financial needs. For example, they may help patients obtain financial aid for medical treatments

and procedures. They may also inform patients about support groups for others living with similar conditions. Social workers also play an important role in advocating for policies that help to reduce health disparities and work towards health equity for underserved populations. They must be open-minded and accepting, as they work with many different people who have varying cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Just as social workers provide support to you throughout your healthcare journey, Patient Advocate Foundation also wants to meet your educational needs. Is there anything you would like to see from us? Any topics you think we should write about? Email us at education@patientadvocate.org and let us know!

