

The [value of palliative care](#) for people living with serious illness is well proven, along with the need for a skilled workforce that can provide these services.

Social workers, with their training in whole person care and their focus on social determinants of health, are well positioned to provide high-quality and patient-centered health care to seriously ill patients and their families.<sup>1</sup> They are also able to address health care disparities and inequities as a central palliative care focus. These contributions not only improve patient outcomes, but also facilitate “the triple aim”<sup>ii</sup> of higher quality care, with better outcomes, at a lower cost.

### Social Work Involvement Improves Key Metrics

 <p>Improve Patient Satisfaction<sup>iii</sup></p>	 <p>Improve Patient Communications (the main driver in hospital readmissions<sup>iv,v</sup>)</p>
 <p>Improve Access to Care by Addressing Barriers<sup>vi,vii</sup></p>	 <p>Improve Mental Health Care to Reduce Avoidable Crises<sup>viii,ix</sup></p>

### Social Work Involvement Enhances Team Productivity

 <p>Provide Insight on Psychological Factors Impacting Care<sup>x,xi</sup></p>	 <p>Expand Capacity of Billable Providers</p>
 <p>Uphold State Laws and Regulations</p>	 <p>Ensure Compliance with Organizational and Professional Standards of Accredited Bodies</p>



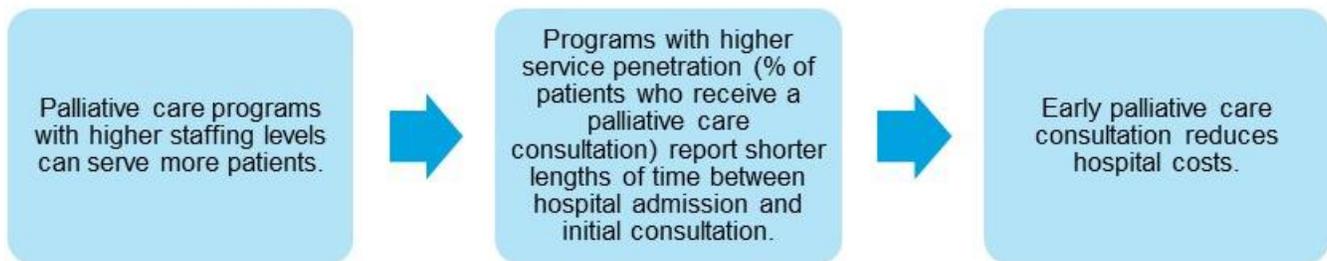
Provide Support to Staff Around Emotional Aspects of Care (e.g., meaning in the work, grief and loss)<sup>xii</sup>

## Some Social Work Services Are Reimbursable



## Social Work Involvement Improves Palliative Care Team Effectiveness

Interdisciplinary collaboration, along with overall higher staffing levels, holds promise for improving health outcomes while providing quality care at lower cost.<sup>xiii</sup>



Additionally, early and continuing social work involvement has long been associated with beneficial hospice outcomes, as well as lower costs of care.<sup>xiv</sup>

## Social Workers are Required for Adherence to National Guidelines

High quality palliative care program adhere to the National Consensus Project Clinical Practice Guidelines for Quality Palliative Care. These national guidelines cite a **specialized palliative care social worker** as part of the interdisciplinary team.<sup>xv,xvi</sup> This specialized focus assures attention to key aspects of care across the guidelines, including:

- Ensuring meaningful, culturally competent communications and shared decision-making with patients and families
- Assessing for all strengths and risks, including mental and emotional health, social needs, substance use concerns, and bereavement risks
- Providing psychosocial interventions and support, with particular attention to bridging transitions and addressing distress

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