

**Primary Care Mental Health Integration
Colocated Collaborative Care Social Worker
Functional Statement
GS-185-11 (Full Performance)**

OVERVIEW:

Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI) is a component of the interdisciplinary Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT). The PCMHI Colocated Collaborative Care (PCMHI CCC) Social Worker (SW) provides brief, evidence-based interventions, education, and consultation services to Veterans, Primary Care Providers (PCPs), and allied PACT members. The PCMHI CCC SW works collaboratively within PACT to promote prevention, early identification, and treatment of most mild to moderate mental health and health behavior concerns as part of routine primary care. PCMHI visits are brief (generally, 30 minutes or less), limited in number (1-6 visits), and structured so that the patient views meeting with the behavioral health provider as a routine primary care service. PCMHI CCC SWs integrate their practice into the fast-paced primary care clinic, engaging in a variety of team-based activities including huddles, case review, consultation, and education. Direct service delivery occurs via brief, focused interventions for up to 8-10 patients daily, with a large percentage of those being seen via warm handoff within PACT to ensure same day access.

QUALIFICATIONS AND GRADE DETERMINING ELEMENTS:

Individuals assigned as GS-11 social workers are at the full performance level. Social workers at this level are licensed or certified to independently practice social work.

1. Meet the qualification standard for the GS-11 Social Worker as defined in See VA Handbook 5005/120, Part II Appendix G39, Social Worker Qualification Standard GS-185 Veterans Health Administration. Requirements include:
 - Citizenship: Be a citizen of the United States. (Non-citizens may be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens in accordance with VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Chapter 3, Section A, paragraph 3.g.)
 - Education: Have a master's degree in social work from a school of social work fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Graduates of schools of social work that are in candidacy status do not meet this requirement until the school of social work is fully accredited. A doctoral degree in social work may not be substituted for the master's degree in social work. Verification of the degree can be made by going to the CSWE website to verify if that social work degree meets the accreditation standards for a master of social work.
 - The qualified social worker has a minimum of one year of post-MSW degree experience in the field of health care social work (VA or non-VA experience) and

licensure or certification in a state at the independent practice level. A doctoral degree in social work may not be substituted for the master's degree in social work. This can be substituted for the required one year of professional social work experience in a clinical setting.

- Licensure: Persons hired or reassigned to social worker positions in the GS-185 series in VHA must be licensed or certified by a state to independently practice social work at the master's degree level. Current state requirements may be found by going to <http://vaww.va.gov/OHRM/T38Hybrid/>.
- Physical Requirements. See VA Directive and Handbook 5019, Employee Occupational Health Services.
- English Language Proficiency. Candidates must be proficient in spoken and written English to be appointed as authorized by 38 U.S.C. § 7403(f).
- Appointment to the GS-11 grade level requires completion of a minimum of one year of post-MSW experience equivalent to the GS-9 grade level in the field of health care or other social work-related settings, (VA or non- VA experience) and licensure or certification in a state at the independent practice level.

2. Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities. In addition to the experience above, candidates must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

- Knowledge of community resources, how to make appropriate referrals to community and other governmental agencies for services, and ability to coordinate services.
- Skill in independently conducting psychosocial assessments and treatment interventions to a wide variety of individuals from various socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, educational, and other diversified backgrounds.
- Knowledge of medical and mental health diagnoses, disabilities and treatment procedures (i.e., acute, chronic and traumatic illnesses/injuries, common medications and their effects/side effects, and medical terminology) to formulate a treatment plan.
- Skill in independently implementing different treatment modalities in working with individuals, families, and groups who are experiencing a variety of psychiatric, medical, and social problems to achieve treatment goals.
- Ability to provide consultation services to new social workers, social work graduate students, and other staff about the psychosocial needs of patients and the impact of psychosocial problems on health care and compliance with treatment.

SUPERVISORY CONTROLS:

The GS-11 social worker performs duties independently and reports directly to the PCMHI Coordinator/Program Manager. For Social Work practice issues, the PCMHI CCC SW has access to the Social Work Executive as needed for complex and sensitive case situations. The Social

Work Executive works in collaboration with the PCMHI Coordinator/Program Manager to complete annual PCMHI SW evaluations. The PCMHI Coordinator/Program Manager provides administrative supervision, general instruction plans, and assigns work.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The PCMHI CCC SW provides functional assessment, triage, brief intervention, education, and consultative services regarding a wide range of possible concerns. Consistent with the VA Whole Health philosophy, the PCMHI CCC SW promotes awareness of the important mental and behavioral aspects of wellness and overall health outcomes. The PCMHI CCC SW utilizes a Population-Based Care and Public Health approach, recognizing the PCP as the overall leader of the treatment team and maximizing the reach of services to as many Veterans as possible. The PCMHI CCC SW accepts referrals from PCPs and allied PACT members and supports guideline-concordant treatment within primary care. Duties include:

1. PCMHI CCC Clinical Practice Management:

- Collaborates with PCPs and the interdisciplinary PACT to support high quality, effective, and coordinated service delivery at the patient and programmatic levels
- Maintains daily open access slots and encourages same day warm handoffs within PACT
- Completes most individual appointments (e.g., 75%) within 30 minutes
- Uses Measurement Based Care (MBC) in accordance with nationally recommended guidelines for PCMHI
- Conducts initial functional assessments that are focused on the main reason(s) for referral and are less extensive than traditional mental health intake evaluations (e.g., 30 minutes vs. 60 or 90 minutes for traditional evaluation)
- Supports Stepped-Care principles to facilitate “on-time, on target” services to Veterans, matching the intensity of services with the level of clinical need
- Refers Veterans with more severe or complex needs to the appropriate general or specialty mental health program
- Provides time-limited, brief, evidence-based, individual or group interventions (e.g., approximately 1-6 sessions) for a broad range of mental health and health behavior concerns within the primary care setting
- Utilizes intermittent visits and flexible patient contact strategies to support brief but longitudinal PCMHI care as part of PACT
- Ensures quality of care by successfully completing the national VA PCMHI Competency Training Program (or approved equivalent) and associated ongoing education modules

2. Documentation Skills:

- Writes clear, concise notes that are optimized for collaboration within PACT based on the PCMHI CCC functional assessment and follow-up visit guidelines
- Notes document important elements for team collaboration (e.g., MBC, curbside consultation/team care discussion, liaison with specialty care providers) as appropriate
- Notes are completed same day or within 24 hours

3. Consultation and Interdisciplinary Team Based Skills:

- Engages in PACT huddles and meetings to cultivate collaborative team functioning and serve as a subject matter expert for behavioral health considerations
- Provides education to PACT on mental health and health behavior issues, as well as tips to promote effective patient communication, motivational enhancement, and behavior change
- Integrates self into routine workflow of Primary Care and seeks opportunities to offer expertise or direct patient care services to support team-based care
- Tolerates interruptions, demonstrates flexibility and adaptability, and maintains availability for ad hoc team discussion
- Accepts and encourages same day warm handoffs
- Routinely provides feedback (verbal and/or written) to PCP and other PACT members same day as referral
- Works collaboratively with other team members in PCMHI (e.g., PCMHI Health Technicians, Collaborative Care Managers and Providers with Prescribing Privileges) to ensure high quality, effective, Veteran-centered services at the patient and programmatic levels

CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUIREMENTS:

Incumbent meets the needs of customers while supporting VA missions. Consistently communicates and treats customers (Veterans, their representatives, visitors, and all VA staff) in a courteous, tactful, and respectful manner. Incumbent provides the customer with consistent information according to established policies and procedures. Handles conflict and problems in dealing with the consumer constructively and appropriately.

AGE, DEVELOPMENT, AND CULTURAL NEEDS OF PATIENTS REQUIREMENTS:

The position requires the incumbent possess or develop an understanding of the particular needs of Veterans, including, but not limited to knowledge and sensitivities of age-specific, gender-specific, cultural beliefs and practices, war-era related, and alternative lifestyles of Veterans and their families/caregivers. Sensitivity to the special needs of patients must be consistently achieved.

COMPUTER SECURITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Protects printed and electronic files containing sensitive data in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 and other applicable laws, Federal regulations, VA statutes and policy, and VHA policy
- Protects data from unauthorized release or loss, alteration, or unauthorized deletion
- Follows applicable regulations and instructions regarding access to computerized files, release of access codes, etc.
- Utilization of CPRS/Cerner to execute several office automation functions such as storing and retrieving electronic documents and files; activating printers; inserting and deleting text, formatting letters, reports, and memoranda; and transmitting and receiving email.
- Utilization of the Veterans Health Information and Technology Architecture (Vista) to access information in the Medical Center Computer System

GUIDELINES:

The PCMHI CCC SW uses professional knowledge, skills, and experience derived from education, previous and ongoing professional practice, VA SOP, VA Central Office Directives, NEPEC, professional literature, continuing education, and individual and group consultation.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Work performed will be within the Medical Center, however the position has the opportunity for telework. The Medical Center environment involves everyday risks or discomforts which require normal safety precautions and adherence to the Medical Center Infection Control SOPs, VA Medical Center directives, policy and procedures, and PCMHI SOP's.

SAFETY/ENVIRONMENT OF CARE/INFECTION CONTROL:

- Appropriate use of equipment, supplies
- Maintain safe, orderly work areas
- Report and complete forms for any accident to self, Veteran and vehicle
- Follows Life Safety Management (fire protection) procedures
- Reports safety hazards, accidents and injuries
- Reviews hazardous materials/Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)/waste management
- Follows Emergency Preparedness plan
- Follows security policies/procedures
- Complies with federal, state and local environmental and other requirements preventing pollution, minimizing waste, and conserving cultural and natural resources

- Implements and monitors infection control practices for disease prevention (i.e., hand washing, universal precautions/isolation procedures, including TB requirement/precautions)

APPROVAL:

PCMHI Coordinator/Program Manager

DATE

Social Work Executive

DATE

Chief, Mental Health Services

DATE