

PUBLIC HEALTH SICKLE CELL EDUCATOR/COUNSELOR

This is professional work in the Division of Health Services involving the provision of a range of services to clients who have been identified through laboratory results as having an abnormal hemoglobin. For persons with Sickle Cell disease or trait, employees assess the client's/family's level of comprehension in order to formulate their approach to genetic counseling which includes explaining medical implications, risk of occurrence, heredity patterns, etc. Comprehensive and on-going services are provided to Sickle Cell disease patients, which includes consultation with medical providers, counseling client and/or family, and provision of case management services to identify specific client needs and provide assistance to assure that needs are met. Employees perform a psychosocial assessment, develop a patient care plan and coordinate or provide services in the areas of genetic, personal, financial and career development and adjustment. Employees implement the patient care plan by providing direct services, referrals, and advocacy with related health, social service, education, and employment agencies; provide crises intervention, social support, and assist clients in securing medical services and financial resources for services; coordinate, organize, and facilitate support groups for clients and families with Sickle Cell disease. Employees plan and implement workshops and media presentations to educate the lay community. Consultation and training is provided to professionals, public health department staff and public schools on sickle cell disease and program services. Work with public schools may also include intervening on child's behalf on issues related to absenteeism resulting from disease or to the child's adjustment to school. Technical assistance and training to public health nurses and lab technicians is provided on the identification of appropriate tests and interpretation of lab results; employees assist medical providers with proper reimbursement procedures. They collect patient data and provide reports to the program office. Employees have multi-county or region-wide responsibility and report administratively to regional supervisor and programmatically to statewide program manager. They are the only program representative in their target area and work independently to plan, monitor and implement program activities. Employees participate and provide leadership in planning services and program activities.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Variety and Scope - Work assignments include providing comprehensive case management services to Sickle Cell disease patients who are the target population and genetic counseling to persons with sickle cell trait. Public health departments serve as portal of entry for much of the screening for the Sickle Cell programs and hospitals serve as portal of entry for newborn detection and screening. Employees assess client/family's level of comprehension and formulate an approach to genetic counseling. For disease patients, employees perform a psychosocial assessment, develop a patient plan, provide needed services, referrals, or advocacy with a variety of service providers; provide crisis intervention and support, and assist clients in securing medical services and financial resources for services. Employees provide training and technical assistance to health department staff, medical professionals, and school personnel on sickle cell disease, program services, identification of appropriate tests and interpretation of test results or reimbursement procedures. Employees may intervene with public schools on child's behalf on issues related to absenteeism or adjustment to school.

Intricacy - Employees provide complex case management services to clients with a variety of problems related to Sickle Cell disease or trait. They are responsible for incorporating available and potential resources into a systematic format to meet client needs. Employees are the only program representative in their target area and must demonstrate technical expertise in working with medical professionals, health department staff, public school personnel, and the lay community.

Subject Matter Complexity - Work requires a thorough understanding of Sickle Cell disease and the concepts, practices, and techniques of case management. Employees utilize this knowledge as well as an in-depth knowledge of community resources/agencies and program requirements in providing client care and in the participation in planning services and program activities.

Guidelines - Public Health standards outline the basic components of the program and service to be provided. Program policies, procedures, and professional resource materials are also utilized.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Nature of Instructions - Employees independently plan, monitor, and implement program activities; receive direction from program director and technical advice from peers, program consultant, or program director.

Nature of Review - General review is provided through statistical reports and staffings by the program director.

Scope of Decisions - Decisions regarding case management services affect the client. Employees may provide direction or instruction to health department staff and other medical providers.

Consequence of Decisions - Professional decisions affect the client and family and impact on the social, psychological, emotional, or physical health of the client.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Scope of Contacts - Work requires contacts with clients and their families, a variety of professional disciplines, and community resources.

Nature and Purpose - Employees work with clients, families, and other professionals in the delivery of comprehensive services. Work also involves providing counseling and support to clients and their families and requires employees to serve as the technical representative for the program and to provide training to care providers.

IV. OTHER WORK DEMANDS:

Work Conditions - Considerable time is spent traveling to health departments and schools and involves visits in clients' homes.

Hazards - Employees may experience exposure to hazards in their fieldwork; driving, home environments, and inclement weather.

V. RECRUITMENT STANDARDS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - Thorough knowledge of non-directive counseling, case management, family and group dynamics, intervention techniques, community planning and organization. Knowledge of laws, regulations and policies which govern the program. Excellent oral and written communication skills. Considerable knowledge of medical, behavioral, and psychosocial problems. Skill in establishing rapport with client in applying techniques of assessing psychosocial aspects of client's problems. Ability to understand, interpret and explain genetic aspects of sickle cell syndrome and maintain effective working relationships with clients and their families, the medical and social service communities, and the public school system. Ability to coordinate the services of multiple agencies to meet the needs of individual clients and families.

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Minimum Training and Experience Requirements - Master's in Social Work and two years of human services experience; BSW and three years of human services experience; graduation from a four-year college or university with a degree in a human services or related field and four years of experience in social work in DSS or health care setting, or an equivalent combination of training and experience.