



Statement from the National Association of Social Workers on Consensus Study:
“Integrating Social Needs Care into the Delivery of Health Care to Improve the Nation's Health”

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), representing 125,000 social workers, submits comments on the Consensus Study “Integrating Social Needs Care into the Delivery of Health Care to Improve the Nation's Health.” Founded in 1955, NASW is the largest professional social work organization in the United States. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies.

The mission of the social work profession is to promote the well-being of individuals, families and communities. NASW enthusiastically supports this Consensus Study and looks forward to its analysis of the impact of social needs on health, best practices for interventions and staffing models, and identification of additional areas of research. Social workers provide psychosocial support to diverse and vulnerable populations with mental and physical conditions. They work as private practitioners and are employed in a variety of health care settings such as hospitals, primary care, and skilled nursing facilities. As the largest group of providers of mental health services in the United States, clinical social workers provide assessment and treatment for behavioral health conditions. Many innovative health care models now include professional social workers and lead to better outcomes and coordinated care for patients and families. This Consensus Study will facilitate NASW’s advocacy for appropriate social work roles and responsibilities in health care settings that align with social work training and expertise.

NASW anticipates that this Consensus Study will provide guidance on actionable steps that health systems can take to offer models of care that are more efficient and cost-effective, and services that lead to better health outcomes and patient satisfaction. Health care service delivery can be optimized when team members perform activities in their area of expertise and practice at the top of their license. NASW expects that this Consensus Study will facilitate recognition of the important role of social workers in interprofessional health care teams. The guidance from the Consensus Study can also be used to identify workforce needs and ensure that opportunities for education and training align with evolving health care models. NASW hopes that barriers to delivering coordinated, person-centered care will be reduced and ultimately lead to improved health and well-being for people and communities across the United States.