

NASW Center for Workforce Studies
& Social Work Practice

Social Workers in Psychiatric Hospitals

occupational profile



Overview

Psychiatric hospitals specialize in the treatment of mental illnesses and provide mental health services in settings such as acute care, partial hospitalization, and residential care. Some hospitals admit patients on a voluntary basis, while others commit patients involuntarily in instances where the patients may pose a danger to themselves or others. Depression, severe anxiety, psychotic, and substance-related disorders are examples of some of the illnesses treated.

Overview of Functions

Social workers provide an array of services within a psychiatric hospital. Clinical social workers provide insight-oriented, behavior modifying and supportive psychotherapy. Others social workers provide substance use counseling to patients who may have alcohol, recreational, or illicit drug addictions. Social workers are valuable members of the multidisciplinary treatment team, providing individual, group and family therapy, and rehabilitation services.

Benefits/Challenges of Working in a Psychiatric Hospital

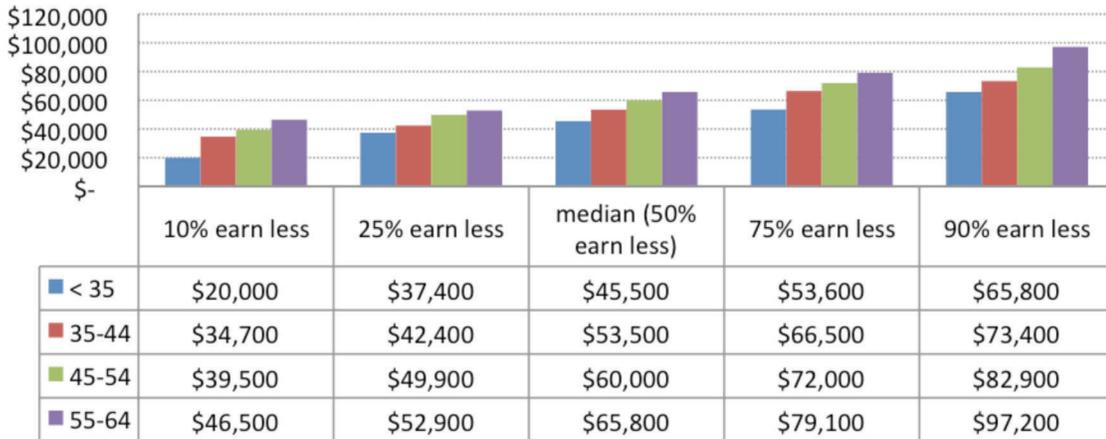
There are several advantages to working in a psychiatric hospital including:

- Opportunities to acquire clinical supervision required for a state clinical social work license.
- A variety of work schedules within a 24 hour period.
- Opportunities to obtain broad clinical experiences in areas such as health, mental health, addiction services, and discharge planning.
- However, working in a psychiatric hospital can be challenging due to the stressful work activities associated with high risk populations. In such situations, a supportive environment and self-care are important to help avoid work related stress.

Data referenced in this profile are based upon results from the *2009 NASW Salary & Compensation Study* (see Notes).

Salary Analysis of Social Workers in Psychiatric Hospitals (n=454)

ANNUAL SALARY BY AGE¹



ANNUAL SALARY BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE²



¹ Your age? (under 25; 25-29; 30-34; 35-39; 40-44; 45-49; 50-54; 55-59; 60-64; 65 and older)

² In what year did you first begin working in the social work field?

ANNUAL SALARY BY DEGREE³



ANNUAL SALARY BY CERTIFICATION⁴



³ Which of the following academic degrees do you hold (if any)?

⁴ In which of these areas (if any) do you hold current certifications? Please check all that apply.

ANNUAL SALARY BY SECTOR⁵



ANNUAL SALARY BY PRACTICE AREA⁶



⁵ On October 1, 2009, what was the sector of your primary social work position?
⁶ Which one option best matches the primary practice area of your primary position? (Please check the one best option.)

ANNUAL SALARY BY REGION⁷



ANNUAL SALARY BY CENSUS REGION



⁷ On October 1, 2009, what was the city, state, and ZIP code of your primary work location?

ANNUAL SALARY BY CENSUS REGION (CONTINUED)



Survey Methodology

This survey was sponsored and developed by NASW. Data were collected and tabulated by Readex Research, an independent research company. To broaden representation of the profession, NASW partnered with a number of other social work membership organizations to create an expanded list of U.S. professional social workers for sampling purposes. These partner organizations were:

- Association for Oncology Social Work (AOSW)
- National Hospice & Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO)
- National Network for Social Worker Managers (NNSWM)
- The Rural Social Work Caucus
- Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care (SSWLHC)

The total number of unduplicated individuals among these five lists and the NASW domestic membership was 101,995. The overall sample size of 78,777 consisted of the 73,777 with a valid email address on file and a systematic sample of 5,000 (from the 28,218 who could not be reached via email).

Data collection utilized a mixed mode approach. For those with a valid email address, invitations were sent via email to access a Web-based survey. Those without an email address were sent invitations via regular mail, with the option to fill out a provided paper survey or to access the survey online via a provided Web site address.

Data were collected between October 1 and November 24, 2009. A total of 23,889 unduplicated usable responses were received, for a 30% response rate. Among these, 22,000 responses were randomly chosen for inclusion in the final tabulation. The data have been weighted to account for disproportional response between the email and regular mail samples. Percentages based on all 22,000 responses are subject to a margin of error of $\pm 0.6\%$.

RESPONDENT STATUS

The compensation analysis focuses on the subset of “valid answering practitioners”—that is, U.S.-based respondents confirming paid employment or self-employment on October 1, 2009 in a social work-related position (defined as any position that requires or makes use of one’s education, training, or experience in social work), and reporting regular salary or wages. Percentages based on these 17,851 “valid answering practitioners” are subject to a margin of error of $\pm 0.6\%$. *Results are not shown in this profile if there were fewer than 30 valid values in a category.*

Removed are those who did not answer at all, those who provided a report considered to be an outlier (top 1% and bottom 1% of all responses), and those who did not answer in a coherent manner. The tabulated base of the “answering practitioners” is 17,911.



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