

A Natural Next Step

Social workers can now be certified in clinical transplant

BY SANDY McMATH and LAURIE McDONALD

Transplant social workers have a new way to demonstrate their specialized clinical expertise—becoming a certified clinical transplant social worker (CCTSW). Offered by the Society for Transplant Social Workers (STSW), the new credential recognizes members who possess clinical expertise based on knowledge, skills and experience particular to transplantation.

Laurie McDonald, M.S.W., LCSW, CCTSW, chair of the STSW credentialing committee, said that most patients and families are “frightened and bewildered when they start the transplant evaluation. CCTSWs can reassure them of expert guidance and care throughout the process.”

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STSW president, Mary Freeman, M.S.W., LCSW, CCTSW, a social worker at Shands Hospital at the University of Florida in Gainesville, noted that “several disciplines within the transplant community have developed standards for credentialing their members.” And now, she added, “our profession has devised standards specific to social work that will enhance professional and public recognition of our work.”

To obtain the CCTSW certification, an individual must meet the following requirements:


- be an STSW member in good standing
- hold a master’s degree in social work from a program that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) or is determined to be equivalent. The program must have been accredited by the CSWE or CASWE or equivalent at the time the degree was received
- be licensed at the highest level of social work licensure available to health-care practitioners in the state/province/territory or country in which he or she practices
- currently work as a clinical social worker in a transplant center or in a transplant-related field
- have served for a minimum of two years as a post-M.S.W. social worker in a transplant center or in a transplant field
- have experience with at least one transplant population—but also is aware of multiple areas of transplantation populations and have a basic understanding of the



principles related to living donors and adult and pediatric recipients and

- have earned at least 20 transplant-specific continuing education units (CEUs), which include the following: all STSW conference CEUs, any CE article from *Progress in Transplantation*, any CEUs directly related to clinical transplant social work practice (such as anxiety, grief and depression) and any CEUs directly related to transplant itself (such as immunology and tissue typing).

Since its founding in 1986, STSW has been committed to promoting professional excellence and ethical clinical social work practice in transplantation. STSW has continuously provided opportunities for professional growth, communication and mutual support among transplant social workers. It also has advanced social work practice through education, research and publications on psychosocial issues in transplantation.

“The CCTSW credential was clearly the next step,” committee chair McDonald said. “It will help members distinguish themselves in today’s competitive market and promote professionalism within the transplant social work community.” 



For more information, visit transplantsocialworker.org.

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