

Testimony on SB 149
AAC Improved Social Worker to Resident Ratios in Nursing Homes

The current ratio for Social Worker/residents does not accurately represent the needed services our residents deserve. Many of our roles have changed over the years including the constant demands of the new MDS 3.0 (Multiple Data Set) charting which significantly increased the amount of time it takes for a social worker to complete an assessment and multiple duplication MDS are now required, enforcing that residents be interviewed multiple times a week, Care plans, quarterly review progress notes, Assessments, Caa notes, Ascend documentation, facilitate adjustment, Home care/hospice referrals, discharge planning, insurance management and update to clinical reviewers for continued coverage, family meetings, grievances, resident council, support groups, management of lost articles, room changes and documentation of roommate notification, crisis intervention to name a few can consumes the daily role of a social worker.

The amount of documentation required limits the direct contact with resident and responsible parties. The ratio was first established years ago when the role was quite different. The responsibilities of a social worker have more than tripled due to the current shift in health care and the constant demands of short term rehabilitation clients. These cases are complex with multiple variables to be dealt with to provide a safe discharge. As a social worker it is our role to facilitate interdisciplinary discharge meetings, ensure proper education has been completed and coordination of recommended services in the community. Multiple family meetings are held and insurance approvals advocated for to provide for a safe d/c plan.

As you can see, the need to increase the ratio is imperative to allow our profession to provide the necessary tasks to our clients and to support a team of professionals who work tirelessly to provide the ongoing support that these clients require. As social workers we advocate for our clients regularly, it is now time to advocate for ourselves as a profession.

Thank you,
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