



## **POSITION DESCRIPTION**

### **Kidney Palliative Care Social Worker**

Reports to: Kidney Palliative Care Program Manager

Position Status: Non-Exempt

Supervises: No one

Effective Date: 5/17/24

#### **GENERAL SUMMARY**

The Kidney Palliative Care Team utilizes the principles of palliative care to improve patient quality of life in facing advanced kidney disease. The role will include the following tasks: conduct psychosocial assessment/evaluations including the promotion of advance care planning; participate in inter-professional team review of patient care; provide casework and group work for patients and their families; identify community resources and assist patients and their families in connecting to these resources. This individual serves as a member of the Kidney Palliative Care Team with liaison responsibilities with nephrology clinics, dialysis facility staff, hospital staff and with staff members of community organizations and other health care organizations. This position includes coordinating, scheduling, and facilitating family meetings, working with anticipatory grief, and challenging family dynamics, understanding placement options and appropriate social, financial, and legal services.

#### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Provides outpatient psycho-social evaluation for end-stage kidney disease (ESKD) patients on dialysis at Northwest Kidney Centers.
  - a. Assesses patient/family for psychosocial issues impacting the patient, caregivers, and other people in patient's support system that includes an assessment of a patient's environment, age specific needs, coping skills, spiritual resources, and financial issues.
  - b. Confers with interdisciplinary palliative care team, multidisciplinary dialysis facility staff, nephrology clinic staff, and other health care professionals for input. Collaborates with providers and treatment team to identify behavioral health, cultural, family, and social dynamics, and assesses impact and interrelatedness to the medical situation. Assess patients' and caregivers' coping skills and strengths/weaknesses with focus

upon cultivating improved coping as well as the patient and caregiver experience.

- c. Reviews medical record and consults with collateral sources including family members and providers.
- d. Interviews patient/family/significant others/other social support system as appropriate.
- e. Conducts in-person visits for patients at dialysis facilities, primary place of patient residence (i.e., home, assisted living, adult family home or nursing home), professional office space, hospital or other offsite locations as needed.
- f. Provides telehealth visits for patients and families as appropriate.
- g. Adjusts work schedule as needed to meet the needs of the patients/families.
- h. Coordinates and schedules family meetings with the interdisciplinary Kidney Palliative Care Team and other medical professionals as appropriate.
- i. Ensures Medical Records are completed in a timely manner in keeping with Northwest Kidney Centers Policies and Procedures.

2. Develops plan of intervention.
  - a. Develops a therapeutic relationship with the patient/family.
  - b. Obtains and interprets information from the patient perspective and uses this information to identify patient needs.
  - c. Works with medical staff to establish patient treatment plans and define available options.
  - d. Establishes short and long-term goals consistent with the medical plan of treatment.
  - e. Utilizes intensive case management skills.
  - f. Utilizes therapeutic techniques and problem-solving skills to identify patient values, determine goals of care, and promote shared healthcare decision-making. Assist patients/families in understanding options.
  - g. Guide patients/families in selecting options that best prioritize and match their goals given their specific situation.
  - h. Support patients and families to promote mental health during difficult medical journeys.
  - i. Promote advance care planning, and where appropriate, assist patients and families in completing advance directives.
  - j. Effectively employs counseling skills to empower patient/families to follow agreed upon recommendations for care.
3. Communicates effectively on an interdisciplinary level throughout the continuum of care.
  - a. Regularly shares social work assessments, goals, and plan of intervention with dialysis facility interdisciplinary team for the purpose of facilitating patient adjustment to current situations and to support patients and their families.

- b. Participates as an active team member in meetings and demonstrates a professional working relationship with the Kidney Palliative Care Interdisciplinary Team.
  - c. Acts as a liaison between multidisciplinary medical staff, nephrology clinic staff, patient, and outside agencies.
  - d. Coordinates with community services and other agency disciplines participating in patient care to promote continuity of care needs.
- 4. Attends to the needs of the ESKD population.
  - a. Consistently displays sensitivity and the ability to support patients/families in care decisions and assists with short- and long-term goals, consistent with the medical plan of care.
  - b. Understands the burden of complex illness and how it affects the patient and family members.
  - c. Maintains current knowledge of community agencies and facilities and shares resources with other staff members.
  - d. Keeps informed of eligibility requirements for various services, including but not limited to Medicare and Medicaid regulations.
  - e. Pursues knowledge of palliative care and its benefit to patients and families; attends conferences and seeks out learning.
- 5. Contributes to development of the Kidney Palliative Care Team
  - a. Functions as a palliative care resource for dialysis staff.
  - b. Promotes the development of primary palliative care amongst dialysis staff through coaching and education.
  - c. Participates in quality improvement for the Kidney Palliative Care Team, including:
    - 1. Planning, coordination and implementation of the program and its activities.
    - 2. Help develop, revise, and implement policies and procedures through the quality improvement process.
    - 3. Perform activities necessary to support the growth and development of the program.
- 6. Other duties as assigned.

### **SUPERVISION and COORDINATION**

This position reports to the Kidney Palliative Care Program Manager with responsibility to the Kidney Palliative Care Medical Director.

### **EXTERNAL CONTACTS**

This position has contact with nephrology clinics, hospital staff and with staff members of community organizations and other health care organizations.

### **DECISIONS**

This position is responsible to the Kidney Palliative Care Program Manager and Kidney Palliative Care Medical Director for decision-making required for social services responsibilities. Typical decisions include:

1. Evaluating patient's psychosocial condition and coordinating patient entry and progress through NKC programs.
2. Developing interventions to assist the patient and/or surrogate decision makers in following the treatment plan.
3. Developing and implementing interventions to promote primary palliative care across NKC with direction from the Palliative Care Medical Advisor and Kidney Palliative Care Program Manager.

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS**

Staff are responsible for demonstrating good customer service and professionalism.

1. **CONSIDERATION:** Greet customers promptly; show courtesy; recognize customer's needs; respect privacy.
2. **CONCERN:** Listen to customers; express appreciation, be non-judgmental; take responsibility.
3. **CONFIDENCE:** Show a positive attitude; take personal initiative; inform; educate and reassure; provide prompt follow-up.
4. **CONDUCT:** Hold appropriate conversations; maintain a professional appearance; establish teamwork; show professional competency.

### **JOB CONDITIONS**

Must be able to communicate effectively in English over the telephone, in writing, and in person. Duties and responsibilities are performed in an office environment, patient home/care environment, and clinical dialysis setting.

May be exposed to fumes, blood, and other body fluids. Must wear appropriate PPE during patient encounters, per NKC policy.

Must have transportation available and a current Washington State Driver's license to travel to dialysis facilities, hospitals, and patient homes. Local travel is required throughout King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Clallam Counties on a regular basis.

Physical activities require the ability to stand, walk, stoop, kneel, crouch, reach, lift; fingering, grasping, talking, hearing, and repetitive motions of hands, wrists, and fingers. Requires a high-level of hand-eye coordination. Must have strong visual acuity to read and inspect information on monitors.

Physical requirements include the ability to lift/move objects weighing up to 25 pounds occasionally, and up to 5 pounds frequently. The individual in this position operates the phone, computer, copier, and other office equipment as required. Demonstrated skills in Microsoft Office Products and knowledge of clinical software programs are required.

## **EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

1. MSW required, from an accredited program.
2. Washington State Licensed Independent Social Worker (LICSW) required.
3. Minimum of 5 years of clinical social work experience in a healthcare setting, required.
4. Palliative care and/or hospice experience preferred.
5. Washington State driver's license and proof of automobile insurance, required.

**The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed by people assigned to this classification. They are not to be considered as an exhaustive list of all job tasks performed by people so classified.**

## **REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

DocuSigned by:



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VP of Patient Care Services/CNO

6/21/2024 | 8:23 AM PDT

Date