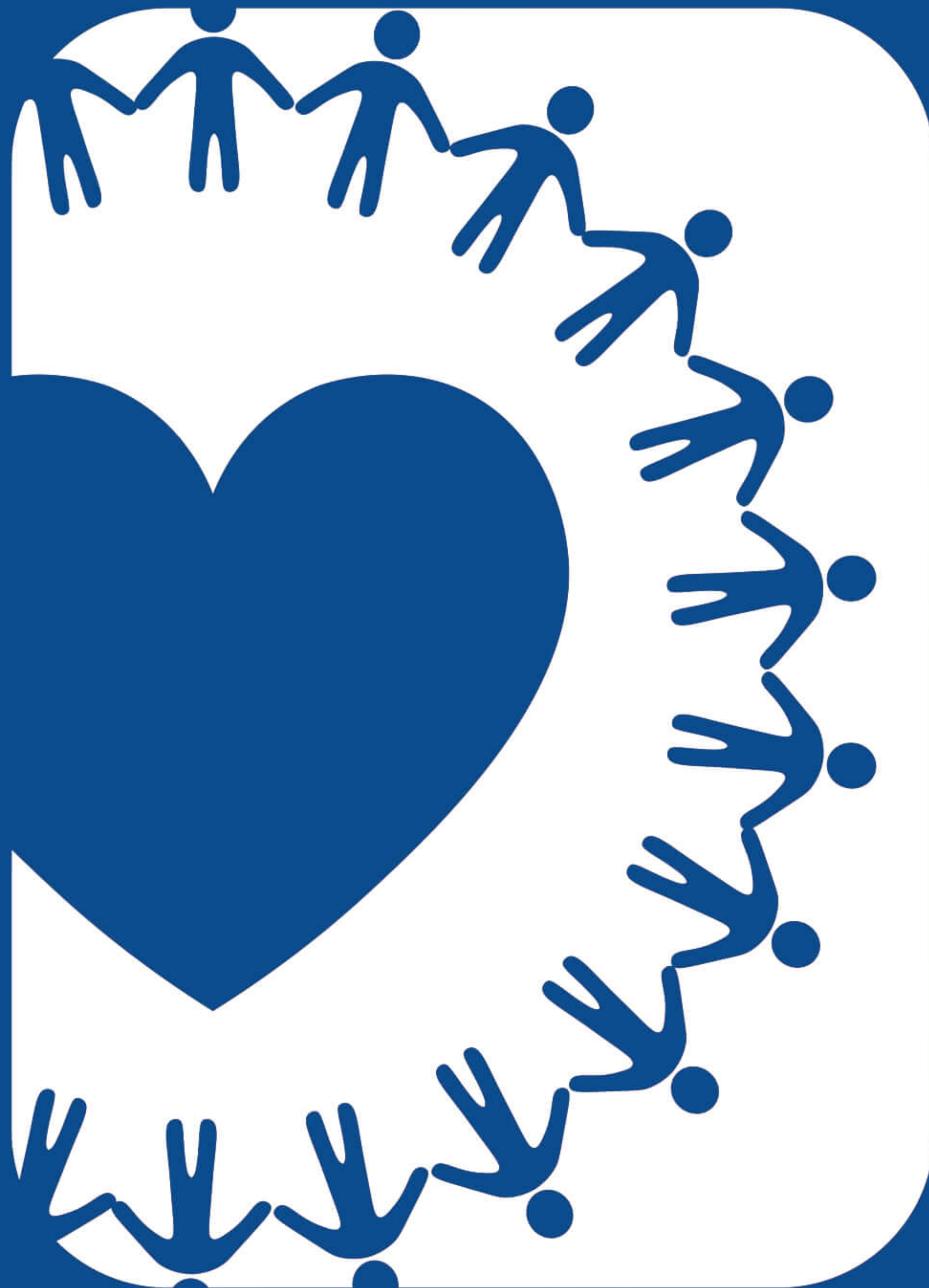


MARCH IS
NATIONAL
**SOCIAL
WORK
MONTH**



WHAT IS A SOCIAL WORKER?

A healthcare social worker refers clients to social services as necessary. They may advise care givers and provide patient education. Many work in medical settings like hospitals, mental health clinics, private practice, schools, child welfare, and human service agencies. They help people through many phases of life in handling difficult issues like depression or the transition plan when a client may leave one level of care to another.

A healthcare social worker provides support and services to groups, individuals, or families that are challenged to cope with terminal, acute, or chronic illness. They promote health and help clients access better healthcare. They resolve serious problems or crises in being an advocate for a clients care and wellbeing.

Often, patients or families need their healthcare social worker to get them started on community programs to aid in recovering from physical or mental illness and to be sure they understand other available services such as housing options, legal aid, financial assistance, education, and job opportunities.

A healthcare social worker may organize support groups or educator patients on available support groups. They may also coordinate rehabilitation and care and see the service is followed through. If a patient's status changes, the healthcare social worker would modify their plan accordingly. They observe environmental issues that may impede a patient's healing and keep records of progress while continuing to evaluate and monitor the case.



ADVANCED CARE PLANNING

For the many older Americans living today with one or more chronic conditions, advance care planning is an important part of chronic disease self-management. While some people living with a chronic disease enjoy a reasonably good quality of life, in many cases, chronic diseases are ultimately accompanied by slow, extended periods of decline and disability. For some, the time may come when they are unable to speak for themselves or make their own decisions regarding health care.

The person you select in your Advance Directive should be:

- Someone you trust
- Someone who understands you
- Someone who will honor your wishes

Once you've completed your advance directive, ensure that copies are provided to your health care proxy, your health care providers, your hospital, and others whom you think should have the information. You may want to review your advance directive from time to time, but for the most part, once you have taken the important step to complete one, you can be comfortable knowing that your wishes and preferences are known, and thus much more likely to be followed.



A social worker can help you setup Advance Directives, Living Wills, and other Advanced Care Planning Services.

Adjusting to a Skilled Nursing Facility

Nursing home social workers help residents and family members adjust to living in the nursing home, with particular attention to assessing psychosocial and emotional care issues such as dealing with loss and grief, assessing and helping to address pain, helping residents remain connected to the community, and supporting residents in maintaining important relationships with family and friends and fellow residents. The social worker is the key staff member to assess and plan psychosocial services, although other staff members also help to deliver these important services. Social workers also help screen residents for depression and other mental health issues, and serve as resident and family advocate. Nursing home social workers work closely with activities directors and the director of nursing, as well as the administrator.

10 Tips for Transitioning to Skilled Nursing Care:

1. Have an idea of what to expect.
2. Select decorative items that bring happy memories.
3. Have a list of items to discuss with the care team.
4. Get to know the staff.
5. Visit, but give your loved one courtesy.
6. Listen to your loved one.
7. Plan outings if possible.
8. Give them a sense of control.
9. Help them get connected with social activities.
10. Be sure to have updated medical records/documents in a safe place



Social Work Month - Support and Guidance

Clinical social workers diagnose and treat mental health conditions as well. They provide individual, family, and couples therapy, and they assist with depression, anxiety, family problems, and other mental health or behavioral issues. They may work in private practice or at a mental health or therapeutic facility. Social workers host support groups, create treatment plans, and facilitate interventions when necessary.

A Social Worker is instrumental in guiding a patient/family based on their specific needs and they may refer different resources/support groups that can be of help, such as:

- **Mental Health Support Groups**
- **Physical Health Support Groups**
- **Physical Therapy Support Groups**
- **Grief Counseling Support Groups**
- **Spiritual & Religious Support Groups**
- **Substance addiction Support Groups**
- **Cancer Support Groups**
- **Counseling Support Groups**
- **Medical Equipment Resources**
- **Financial Support Resources**
- **Respite Care Resources**

IF YOU NEED MORE
INFORMATION OR HAVE ANY
QUESTIONS PLEASE REACH
OUT TO ONE OF OUR
SOCIAL WORKERS.

