Program Highlights

- Exposure to Multi-Campus Health Care System
- Internship in one of the Top 5 VA Medical Centers
- Training in Evidence-Based Therapies
- Social Work Intern Educational Seminars
- Attendance at VA-Sponsored Conferences
- State of the Art Clinical Programs
- Exposure to over 120 Social Workers

Potential Placements

- Acute Psychiatry
- Western Blind Rehabilitation Center
- Hospice and Palliative Care
- Inpatient Medical & Specialized Trauma Programs
- Substance Abuse Treatment Programs
- Outpatient Mental Health
- General Medicine Outpatient Clinic
- Geriatric Medical & Long Term Care Programs
- HUD/VA Supported Housing Program
RESIDENTIAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM- FOUNDATIONS FOR RECOVERY (FOR)

Placement in the Residential Substance Abuse Program at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System involves working with clients who are experiencing distress due to substance abuse as well as other psychiatric problems. The program, known as the Foundations for Recovery (FOR), is a 28-day residential program in a 22-bed facility. As a member of the social work team, the intern will deliver a broad range of services to veterans of all service eras experiencing difficulties due to substance abuse, post-war adjustment to civilian life, and/or have mental disorders. Interns will have the opportunity to develop skills in evidence-based substance abuse treatment, conduct clinical interviews, complete comprehensive biopsychosocial assessments, facilitate and co-facilitate groups, and work in a multidisciplinary treatment team. The intern will also have the opportunity to be involved in the provision of case management, participate in recreational therapeutic outings, and provide individual psychotherapy. This internship will be at the Menlo Park campus.

RESIDENTIAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM- FIRST STEP

First Step is also a residential substance abuse treatment program at the Menlo Park campus. The program is a fast-paced, clinically rich therapeutic environment for SUD and dually diagnosed veterans. It provides an opportunity for trainees to gain experience with a culturally and diagnostically diverse group of veterans. Social Work interns would be involved in providing assessments, individual and group therapy, case management, and discharge planning. The intern would be exposed to treatment therapies which include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for substance abuse and dual diagnosis, motivational enhancement therapy, and skills training in affective and interpersonal regulation. The placement is in Menlo Park.
GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK INTERN PROGRAM

OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH CLINICS

The outpatient mental health clinics specialize in treating veterans who are experiencing distress due to psychiatric illness or life stressors. Social Workers provide assessment and treatment planning; crisis intervention; individual, family/couples, and group therapy; and case management. The provision of therapies utilize evidence-based treatments, with which interns will have multiple opportunities for learning and exposure. The intern will work closely with interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teams and participate in monthly staff meetings. Mental Health clinic placements will be in Livermore and Menlo Park.

HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT-VA SUPPORTED HOUSING PROGRAM (HUD-VASH)

As a member of a social work case management team, the intern will be involved in assisting chronically homeless veterans and their family members to secure permanent housing using Section 8 vouchers and to succeed in reintegration into the community. Using a Housing First and psychosocial rehabilitation approach, case management services support the veteran in establishing permanent housing as a foundation for growth in pertinent life domains. Veterans may require support on self-selected objectives pertaining to medical and mental health, substance abuse, employment, school, finances, legal problems, socialization, and recreation and spirituality, among others. This placement offers the intern with opportunities to participate in the program referral and screening processes, conduct psychosocial assessments, collaborate with veterans in creating treatment plans, coordinate with community agencies (particularly with local public housing authorities in assisting veterans with the Section 8 application procedure), and work alongside case managers in conducting home and community visits with veterans. The intern would also be exposed to the housing first model, harm-reduction model, psychiatric rehabilitation and cognitive therapy. This placement is at the Menlo Park campus.
PATIENT ALIGNED CARE TEAM (PACT)

The Patient Aligned Care Team is a specialized patient-centered program which provides comprehensive patient assessment and care through a team approach, based on patient goals. Social Workers work in primary care clinics, providing consultation with the Primary Care Physician (PCP) and other PACT team members. The social work intern would be involved in providing assistance with advance directives, community and VA referrals, telephone follow-up, abuse reporting, and psychoeducation, especially regarding dementia behaviors. Two placements are available in Palo Alto. One of the placements also has a special role with homeless veterans and screening for the hoptel program.

IMPACT PROGRAM

The IMPACT Program is a pilot program that provides a highly individualized and accessible approach to healthcare management designed to help patients who are high utilizers of the healthcare system reach their healthcare goals. The patients in this program have multiple and complicated health and/or mental health problems, requiring intensive case management. The intern would participate in interdisciplinary treatment team meetings, perform psychosocial assessments, provide care coordination/case management, and meet in person or via telephone with patients to work toward medical goals. The intern would be exposed to Motivational Interviewing, case management, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. This placement is at the Palo Alto campus.

PTSD CLINICAL TEAM (PCT)

This program focuses on veterans with PTSD. Program services include PTSD 101, Anger Management classes for trauma focused treatment, Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) for groups and individuals, and group psychoeducation. Evidenced based practices include Prolonged Exposure and CPT. This placement is in San Jose.

MEDICAL FOSTER HOME

This placement has a mix of clinical and administrative work. Activities include recruitment of potential homes, inspection and oversight/supervision of homes, assessment, placement and psychosocial support of patients in the homes and support of their family and caregivers. The intern will also be exposed to interdisciplinary teams, group therapy and program evaluation. This placement is in San Jose.
POLYTRAUMA PROGRAM

Comprehensive services provided in this program include physical medicine, rehabilitation nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology assessment and therapy, neuropsychological testing and rehabilitation psychology, recreation therapy, low vision and neurovision rehabilitation, social work case management/discharge planning/resource coordination. Intern would be exposed to interdisciplinary team with multiple medical providers. The intern would assist with inpatient treatment and discharge planning, facilitation of family conferences with rehabilitation team and patient, coordination with external and internal hospital providers, and counseling patients and family members on their coping with illness or disability. Exposure to active military as well as veterans. Placement is in Palo Alto.

ACUTE PSYCHIATRY & SPECIALTY PROGRAMS

This is an administrative placement with involvement in process improvement projects, streamlining care coordination across disciplines, and obtaining overview of organizational change in a large governmental health care system. The intern would be exposed to LEAN management techniques and staff development. The placement is in Palo Alto.
The Western Blind Rehabilitation Center provides comprehensive inpatient blind rehabilitation services including orientation and mobility, visual and manual skills training, computer and technology skills, and biopsychosocial services such as psychology, social work, nursing, and recreational therapy. The intern would be involved in psychosocial assessments, treatment and discharge planning, case management, support group facilitation, family education and training, crisis intervention, and supportive psychotherapy. The intern would also be working with the interdisciplinary treatment team and would incorporate a person-centered, cognitive behavioral approach to supportive psychotherapy. This placement is located at Menlo Park.

While gaining information and skills needed to manage the effects of visual impairment, participants are able to form positive plans for the lives they will lead after they complete the program. Whenever possible, this planning involves family members. This focus of the treatment areas are to enable participants to understand and cope with sight loss and to provide rehabilitation to help them achieve the highest level of independence possible.
HARTFORD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM FOR AGING EDUCATION (HPPAE)

The Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education is a national initiative to recruit and train the next generation of social workers who specialize in aging by transforming how geriatric education is taught at master of social work programs nationwide. A new collaboration was launched in 2012 with the John A. Harford Foundation, the Veterans Health Association Geriatric Education and Research Clinical Centers (GRECC) and the Social Work Leadership Institute to implement HPPAE, in partnership with VHA/GRECC and local schools of social work. VA Palo Alto joined this initiative and 2014/15 will be the first year for implementation of the program.

One of the key elements of this initiative is implementing formal geriatric rotations during a primary geriatric field placement. This increases the intern’s practical experience in geriatric programs. Our primary field placements for 2014/15 will include inpatient respite care, Geropsychiatry, and hospice/palliative care. Our rotation sites will include: inpatient short stay program, GRECC, and hospice/palliative care.

INPATIENT RESPITE CARE

The Inpatient Respite Care Program provides short-term nursing home stays for eligible veterans who are disabled or chronically ill and are receiving care at home. These short stays provide the in-home caregiver a needed break in the on-going care of the veteran with the goal of keeping the veteran at home for as long as possible. This placement offers the intern the opportunity to screen cases referred from a variety of sources, including acute medical care, urgent care, ER, adult day care, home health agencies, community hospitals, and other VA programs. The intern will be involved in completing biopsychosocial assessments in a variety of referral settings. The intern will work closely with community and VA resources, the veteran, family, and health care professionals to develop treatment and discharge plans. The intern will also be involved in the coordination and facilitation of family meetings, supportive counseling, case management, and patient/family education. This placement is at the Menlo Park campus.

HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

This program provides hospice and palliative care in an in-patient setting. The program centers around providing interdisciplinary supportive care for patients and families dealing with life-threatening or terminal illness. The intern will be involved in psychosocial assessments and care plans, interdisciplinary team meetings, provide unit tours, and provide education about VA benefits, discharge and aftercare planning. The intern will also be involved in co-facilitating a bereavement support group. The placement is in Palo Alto.
GEROPSYCHIATRY

Services provided in this program include end of life care, skilled nursing care, advance care planning and conservatorship. The intern would be involved in case management, discharge planning, advance directives, community referrals. This is primarily exposure to case management but there is also group therapy and interdisciplinary team work, diagnostic formulation and experience with severe, chronic mental illness and dementia. This placement is in Menlo Park.

VETERANS RECOVERY CENTER

The target patient population for this program is seriously mentally ill. Most patients are over 60 suffering from severe mental illness such as major depression, bipolar, severe PTSD, schizophrenia, schizo-affective disorder. The program purpose is to help patients better manage their illness and to lead a more meaningful and productive life. Veterans often have a history of psychiatric hospitalization and this program serves as a “step down” to assist them in being able to manage their problems. Intern would be exposed to CBT, ACT, social skills training, motivational interviewing, crisis management, assertive community treatment, DBT, and others. The intern would facilitate or co-facilitate educational groups related to veterans needs, meet individually with veterans to assist them in identifying and actively working on their recovery goals, assist with mental health evaluation/triage, assist with community-based case management, attend staff meetings, work on performance improvement projects. The intern will be working with an interdisciplinary team. Placement is in Menlo Park.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
The Department of Veterans Affairs is affiliated with over 180 Graduate Schools of Social Work and operates the largest and most comprehensive clinical training program for social work students-training over 900 students per year. The majority of students receive generous VA stipends.

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