

**Department of State Hospitals - Atascadero
Atascadero, California**

**MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

Informational Brochure

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE HOSPITALS - ATASCADERO
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

GENERAL SUMMARY

The California Department of State Hospitals-Atascadero (DSH-Atascadero) offers graduate students in Social Work a forensic mental health internship opportunity. The internship program is a challenging, stimulating, and growth-oriented experience which provides the intern with a practical complement to the university education. It is designed to support the intern in developing a framework of thought that allows exploration and understanding of clinical syndromes and treatment modalities. This includes: learning how the law interfaces with mental health treatment, practicing assessment, designing and evaluating treatment plans, providing psychoeducational groups, educating and assisting families, collaborating in planning patient discharges, and experience with state agencies.

AGENCY OVERVIEW

DSH- Atascadero opened in 1954 and is a completely self-contained psychiatric hospital constructed within a security perimeter. Located on California's Central Coast, midway between San Francisco and Los Angeles, the hospital is an all-male, maximum security, forensic, psychiatric facility that specializes in the treatment of adult, mentally ill males committed from across the state. DSH-Atascadero is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations.

The hospital receives patients committed by the Courts and the Department of Corrections & Rehabilitations. The hospital has a licensed capacity for 1,275 beds. The hospital's facilities include 34 housing units, a gymnasium, arts and crafts workshop, graphic arts center, Board of Parole Hearing rooms, mock trial facilities, staff-patient canteen, school area, computer center, music center, psychological testing center, video production center, training center, patient library, professional library, and fitness center.

The hospital employs approximately 1,920 employees in clinical, administrative and support categories. Clinical staff members with whom interns will work alongside include Physicians, Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Nurses, Dieticians, Rehabilitation Therapists and Psychiatric Technicians.

AGENCY MISSION

The mission statement of DSH- Atascadero is, "To provide evaluation and treatment in a safe and responsible manner, by leading innovation and excellence across a continuum of care and settings.

AGENCY GOALS

Safe Environment

Organizational and Operational Excellence

Innovative Treatment and Forensic Evaluation

Integrated Behavioral Health Systems

AGENCY VALUES

Safety

Treatment

Responsibility

Empowerment

Respect

Communication

DEMOGRAPHICS

The hospital's average working census consists largely of:

Offenders with Mental Health Disorders: Patients who are paroled to DSH-Atascadero by authority of the Board of Parole Hearings are admitted under the provisions of Penal Code 2962 or Penal Code 2972. Patients committed under Offenders with Mental Health Disorders law have completed their prison sentence and are sent to DSH-Atascadero to receive psychiatric treatment as a special condition of parole. Once discharge criteria are met, patients committed under Offenders with Mental Health Disorders law may be released to state parole supervision, placed in their county Conditional Release Program, or within local county facilities.

Other patient commitments to the hospital include:

Mentally Ill Inmates: The hospital provides acute mental health services to inmates from the California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation, under Penal Code 2684. The focus of treatment of the Mentally Ill Inmate is to stabilize symptoms such that the inmate/patient can function successfully and safely upon return to prison.

Incompetent to Stand Trial: The hospital provides treatment and education services to patients admitted under Penal Code 1370. These patients receive specialized programming targeted at helping them gain the knowledge and skills necessary to return to court as competent to understand court proceedings and effectively participate in their defense.

Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity: Patients admitted under Penal Code 1026, have been found not guilty by reason of insanity at the time the crime was committed. Once criteria are met, patients committed under Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity may be released from the hospital and placed into in their county Conditional Release Program.

The cultural diversity of the patient population includes representatives from Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, Native American, Filipino, Vietnamese, Thai, Indian, Korean, Laotian, Cambodia, Chinese, Japanese and other Asiatic groups. Patients are provided treatment services in their preferred language, when possible, which includes services in Spanish, Chinese, Farsi, Vietnamese, Russian, Tagalog, French, Hmong, Portuguese, American Sign Language to name a few. Reflecting the variety of backgrounds and needs, religious worship and spiritual services are provided to patients who identify as Protestant, Catholic, Baptist, Muslim, Jehovah's Witness, Jewish, Buddhism, Christian Science, Mormon, Pentecostal, Hindu, as well as various Native American faiths and other denominations.

TREATMENT

DSH-Atascadero utilizes a patient-centered and strengths-based approach to assessment, treatment, and discharge planning of patients. The agency provides individualized active recovery services that focus on maximizing the functioning of persons with psychiatric disabilities.

The hospital is organized into five residential programs consisting of several treatment units each. Programs and units are generally structured around providing treatment to patients of particular commitment categories. Although subject to change, the focus of treatment for each program is organized as follows:

- ◆ Program 1: Incompetent to Stand Trial
 - ◆ Program 3: Offenders with Mental Health Disorders
 - ◆ Program 4: Enhanced Treatment Program
 - ◆ Program 5: Mentally Ill Inmate
 - ◆ Program 6: Offenders with Mental Health Disorders, Acute Medical, Enhanced Treatment Unit
 - ◆ Program 7: Offenders with Mental Health Disorders
- *all programs may have patients committed under Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity

The residential treatment programs provide a variety of individual, group, and unit-wide skills training, as well as rehabilitative and enrichment activities. These activities are prescribed by the patient's treatment team according to the patient's identified interests and assessed needs. A patient's treatment team consists of an interdisciplinary membership, including at least the patient, treating Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Rehabilitation Therapist, Social Worker, Registered Nurse, and Psychiatric Technician Sponsor. Additional treatment team members may include the patient's family, guardian, advocates, and attorneys as appropriate.

Rehabilitation programs provide patients with the opportunity to learn an increasing number of vocational and work skills under the direction of trained vocational counselors and a variety of school-based classes where patients can improve academic achievement, receive a high school general equivalency degree, or pursue advanced independent studies.

A number of specialized programs and services exist to address the broad range of patient needs. Some of these include:

- ◆ Neuropsychological Assessment and Consultation
- ◆ Psychology Assessment Center
- ◆ Music Center
- ◆ Aztec School
- ◆ Community Center
- ◆ Substance Abuse Treatment and Education
- ◆ Vocational Development Services

SOCIAL WORK INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Program Overview

The program's mission is to train interns to function as complete professionals who can function effectively in a forensic mental health setting. The primary emphasis of the internship program is on clinical training. Interns are encouraged to think critically and apply appropriate assessment and treatment methods. Experiences within the internship program are designed to assist in achieving the goal of educational and professional competency by the end of the training year.

Expected Core Competencies

In alignment with National Association of Social Workers "*Standards for Social Work Case Management*," it is expected that by the end of the training year interns will develop various levels of proficiency in many, if not all, of the following competency areas:

- ◆ Ethical & Legal Considerations
- ◆ Knowledge: Forensic Assessment & Treatment Interventions
- ◆ Cultural Competence
- ◆ Interdisciplinary & Inter-Organizational Collaboration
- ◆ Professional Development & Competency
- ◆ Service Planning, Implementation & Monitoring
- ◆ Professional Conduct
- ◆ Practice Evaluation & Improvement
- ◆ Advocacy & Leadership

Experiences by which interns develop competency include:

- Case Management and Individual meetings with patients
- Psychosocial assessment and treatment planning of culturally and ethnically diverse patient groups
- Objective writing and outcome evaluation
- Psychoeducational group co-facilitation
- Forensic education/training
- Family assessment & education
- Discharge planning & community resource coordination
- Journal article readings, trainings, & seminars
- Participation in various program and unit- based meetings
- Collaborating within a multidisciplinary team with culturally/individually diverse colleagues
- Professional consultation
- Participation in clinical supervision
- Internship program evaluation

Program Resources

Staff: The hospital employs approximately 31 Licensed Clinical Social Workers (LCSW) from which intern preceptors are drawn. The entire Social Work body consists of 42 Social Workers, who have a variety of experience backgrounds prior to employment and many years of experience to offer to interns.

Equipment: Office space, intern computers, the hospital's professional library, and other necessary resources are provided for interns commensurate with the resources provided to staff Social Workers.

Intern Activities

The training program is structured, yet tailored to the identified needs of the individual intern depending on their level and type of prior experience.

Orientation

The first three weeks of training are set aside for orientation to the hospital; including first-aid, Therapeutic Strategy Interventions, forensic commitment codes of patients, rules governing documentation, clinical treatment concepts, and administrative directives. During this time, the intern will be meeting other hospital Social Workers, becoming acquainted with ancillary programs, and establishing learning goals for the year.

Rotations

Interns may complete a rotation on an admissions unit, where they will be involved primarily in conducting psychosocial assessments on newly admitted patients to the facility. Interns then participate in a rotation on selected treatment units, during which the intern will participate in treatment planning, psychoeducational group provision, family education, discharge planning/facilitation. Throughout rotations, the intern will be designated a modified caseload of the assigned unit Social Worker. The intern will be provided the opportunity, within supervised guidelines, to function as much as possible (and when appropriate) as an independent practitioner on an interdisciplinary team.

The rotation of unit assignment will be determined by the educational and experiential needs and preferences of the intern in conjunction with the needs of the Social Work Department and the hospital. While placed on a unit, the intern will be provided support from the assigned unit Licensed Clinical Social Worker. These Social Workers, will act as preceptors and support the intern in negotiating the documentation requirements as well as providing consultation in dealing with procedural or clinical issues.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Admission Criteria

Social Work internships are offered to MSW students currently enrolled and in good standing with a CSWE accredited education program. Prior to the commencement of an internship at DSH-Atascadero, students must have successfully completed at least one previous year of internship placement or have an equivalent period of forensic mental health facility experience.

Application and Intern Selection

DSH-Atascadero seeks Social Work Interns with diverse backgrounds of interests, education, and training, to gain experience in a forensic mental health agency. The hospital is an equal opportunity employer.

Social Work students considering applying to DSH-Atascadero for internship are encouraged to discuss with their university field internship coordinator their interest. The university field internship coordinator should make contact with the Supervising Social Worker of Professional Education at DSH-Atascadero to establish a current contact between agencies, to facilitate contact between the intern candidate and the Supervising Social Worker, and to assist in coordinating a scheduled in-person interview.

The application and interviews of intern candidates must be completed by May 1st prior to the commencement of a Fall internship. Acceptance into the MSW Internship Program is contingent on the intern successfully complete/pass the required security clearance and health screening.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information, please contact:

Stephen Sisk-Provencio, MSW, LCSW
Chief of Social Work Service

Department of State Hospitals - Atascadero
10333 El Camino Real
Atascadero, CA 93423
Phone: (805) 468-2038
Fax: (805) 468-3111
E-mail: stephen.siskprovencio@dsh.ca.gov