This Administrative Regulation is to be made available in law libraries or other inmate resource centers.

SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW

Changed name of the AR. Revised General section. Changes to 1, E. Minor wording revisions throughout.
PURPOSE

To guide the provision of social work services to discharging, post release supervision or paroling inmates within the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) for the purpose of decreasing recidivism, promoting successful community reintegration, and addressing continuity of care among those inmates deemed to have multiple and/or high needs.

GENERAL

Priority inmates who may be served are those who have been identified as having the following risk factors and who usually have multiple needs (list is not all inclusive):

- Major Mental Illness
- History of a Sex Offense
- History of Violent Offenses
- History of chronic substance abuse
- Serious and chronic medical conditions

Certified Master Social Workers (CMSW) within the employ of NDCS are certified by the state of Nebraska to provide social work services and most are licensed as mental health practitioners or they are provisionally certified/licensed as such.

The primary role of the CMSW is to:

- Assist identified high needs inmates with discharge planning.
- Serve as resource persons and consultants to other NDCS staff.
- Provide mental health services to inmates/parolees as a need is identified.

Inmates may obtain social work assistance depending on the number and severity of their risk factors. Other factors that will be taken into consideration for deciding who will receive social work services include the presence or absence of outside supports and financial entitlements which the inmate/parolee may be able to access. Other inmates not identified above may receive social work service if a review of their history and current functioning indicate they are not capable of arranging for their own discharge needs.

Social work practicum students work under the supervision of the program professionals in the institution in which they are placed, an NDCS CMSW, and under the supervision of their educational institution. Practicum students are provided placement in accordance with a written Affiliation Agreement between NDCS and their educational institution or they have submitted and had approved an application for a practicum placement.

Social Work Services is under the Health Services Chain of Command. The Director of Social Work reports to the Behavioral Health Administrator. While Social Work is a distinct service in Behavioral
Health Services, we seek to integrate all of the service components of the individuals with whom we work. Social Work staff will work collaboratively with probation, parole and other NDCS programs and services to provide a continuum of care to inmates as they are leaving the correctional system.

**PROCEDURE**

I. Referral Process:

Any NDCS Staff can refer an inmate for social work services if staff deems the inmate needs assistance with discharge planning and has multiple needs and/or is high risk.

A. Submit form DCS-A-mnh-004, entitled: Mental Health/Medical Referral Form (Attachment A), to a social worker serving the institution where the inmate is housed or to the Director of Social Work at the Nebraska State Penitentiary (NSP) or call or email the Director of Social Work or a social worker who covers the inmate’s institution to discuss the possible referral (form DCS-A-mnh-004 may be requested).

B. The referral will be reviewed for appropriateness of social work services.

C. The referring person will be informed of the outcome which could be:

1. The referral is appropriate and a social worker will be assigned to meet with the referred inmate/parolee.

2. The referred inmate does not meet the criteria for direct social work assistance.

3. The referral source may be asked to resubmit the request if the inmate’s discharge or parole hearing date is more than six months out.

4. When submitted, completed referral forms will be uploaded to NICaMS as part of the inmate’s records.

D. Teams that work specifically in mental health may develop their own process for referrals to social work. Priority will be given to inmates identified with a serious Mental Illness (MMI) as defined in AR 115.23, Section VI. Determination of appropriateness of referral will be based on mental health information found in NICaMS, information provided by the referring source, a review of outside documentation, if available, and consultation with mental health or medical staff if the referral is from another source. If the referred inmate does not meet criteria for social work involvement, efforts will be made to provide resource information and/or consultation with the referring individual. Inmates can refer themselves for social work assistance and will be helped based on the criteria noted above. Inmates who have been referred to a social worker are not mandated to receive services and can refuse social work services if they so choose. Referrals will be made to the Reentry Specialist for requests that fall short of meeting Social Work Criteria.

E. Inmates who received social work services while incarcerated and who will be discharging to parole may continue to receive social work assistance through the parole social worker if needed. Parolees who received social work assistance while at NDCS will be referred to the appropriate OPA social worker and parole officer for continuity of care.
F. Substance Abuse Unit (SAU) inmates may get priority CMSW assistance if there is a Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) funded social worker assigned to their unit. These social workers are funded by the federally administered RSAT grant which determines inmate eligibility for grant funded services. RSAT funded social workers will only be able to work with inmates who are in or who have successfully graduated from a residential substance abuse treatment program during their current incarceration.

II. Time Frame:

Whenever possible, referrals should be made at least three months or more in advance of discharge to allow the social worker time to investigate the needs of the inmate referred and get assistance in place prior to leaving. It is recognized that it will not always be possible to refer an inmate in this time frame. Later referrals will still be accommodated, but the assistance that can be offered may be restricted due to time considerations.

III. Scope of services that can be provided as need indicates:

A. Assistance with obtaining Social Security benefits
B. Assistance with obtaining Medicaid benefits
C. Assistance with appropriate living arrangements
D. Follow-up medication management
E. Follow-up mental health appointments
F. Follow-up substance abuse treatment
G. Assistance in obtaining identification documents
H. Medical follow-up appointments
I. Information about clothing resources
J. Assistance with food resources, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, aka Food Stamps)
K. Resource and support services information
L. Veterans assistance
M. Information about work assistance resources
N. Information about education resources
O. Other services as identified

When inmates are transferred to other institutions within NDCS, the social worker who has started to work with an inmate will continue to provide services when practical to do so;
otherwise, the inmate will be referred to another social worker to follow up with discharge planning if further planning is still needed. Social workers maintain the same level of confidentiality as noted in AR 115.23 Section XI paragraph I.

IV. Documentation:

Documentation of social work services will be maintained electronically on NICaMS on the Mental Health tab.

A. Direct and collateral contacts will be noted and entered into NICaMS at the earliest opportunity but no later than by the end of the month in which the contact took place.

B. Releases of Information will be obtained to document the inmate’s/parolee’s consent to obtain or share information with outside entities and the releases will be scanned into NICaMS.

C. Documents, such as a discharge information form or releases of information, will be uploaded and stored electronically.

D. Inmates who are recommended for social services, but decline to accept will be asked to complete a Social Work Services Refusal Form (Attachment B). The original of the completed form will be given to the inmate and a copy will be uploaded on to NICaMS in the Mental Health section.

E. No clinical records will be taken off-site except for between facilities as necessary for the provision of services in institutions that are not where the social worker maintains their primary office. Reasonable efforts will be made to minimize the need to take any clinical records outside of any institution. Any paper documentation will be securely stored as noted in AR 115.23 section XII B.

V. Suicide prevention/intervention:

A. Any social worker who has concerns about an inmate/parolee being suicidal or aggressive either because of statements made by the inmate or because of behavioral changes noted by the social worker will notify staff as outlined in AR 115.30 section II, paragraphs A-1 and A-2.

B. Any concerns about suicidal or aggressive behaviors and the steps taken to address these concerns will be documented at outlined in AR 115.30, section II, paragraph A-3.

VI. Hand-off communication/Informed Consent: The social worker will notify the inmate that discharge plans and needs will be shared with relevant institutional staff and community partners as noted in AR 115.23 section XII.I.2. In addition, the inmate will be encouraged to give consent (Attachment C) for the social worker to share discharge plans with relevant community agencies and family/supports.
REFERENCES

I. ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS
   A. AR 115.23 Mental Health Service
   B. AR 115.09 Substance Abuse Treatment Programming, Detoxification and Chemical Dependency
   C. AR 209.01 Reentry Planning and Release
   D. AR 115.30 Suicide Prevention/Intervention
   E. AR 210.02 Discharge Planning for Segregated Inmates
   F. AR 115.12 Special Needs Inmate Programs

II. AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION STANDARDS – 4-4433

III. ATTACHMENTS:
   A. Mental Health/Medical Referral Form: DCS-A-mnh-004 (11/98)
   B. Social Work Services Refusal Form