

GENERAL ORDER NO. 351

Subject: ESTABLISHMENT, FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION OF A SOCIAL SERVICE SECTION.

The following General Order is hereby promulgated, effective April 1926, for observance by all officers and employes of the U. S. Veterans' Bureau:

1. There is hereby established in the Medical Service of Central Office a Social Service Section, under the supervision of a Chief Social Worker, who will supervise the activities of all social workers in the Regional Offices, Suboffices, and the hospitals of the U. S. Veterans' Bureau.

2. The Chief Social Worker, under supervision of the Medical Director and under the limitations of the budget, will approve field recommendations for appointments of social workers when actual need therefor is shown in such field requests. At field stations, particularly U. S. Veterans' hospitals, where problems to be solved are not distinctly psychiatric, a social service worker or workers, other than psychiatric workers, may be assigned.

3. The psychiatric social worker in the Regional Office will be assigned to the Neuropsychiatric Subdivision and will work under the Chief of that Subdivision. Through him she will be responsible to the Regional Medical Officer. All cases are to be assigned to her by the Chief of the Neuropsychiatric Subdivision and all reports are to be made to him, or through him, to other interested individuals. The functions of the psychiatric social worker in the Regional Office will be:

- a. To secure complete and trustworthy social histories on neuropsychiatric cases, both for the use of the Regional Office and the hospital to which a patient is admitted.
- b. To assist the neuropsychiatrist in affording satisfactory treatment to neuropsychiatric patients, by solving social problems which interfere with such treatment.
- c. To investigate the economic adjustment of convalescent neuropsychiatric patients and to cooperate with the employment service in assisting in placing these patients in suitable and gainful occupations.

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- d. To investigate the home environment of neuropsychiatric patients whose parole from a hospital is under consideration, and to cooperate with the guardianship officer in ascertaining and promoting the social adjustment of incompetent patients in the community.
- e. To contact, cooperate with, and whenever possible, to secure the aid of other social service agencies in the respective regional territories, such as state, county, or city organizations, and the American Red Cross, utilizing wherever possible the facilities available through such outside obstacles to the recovery of neuropsychiatric beneficiaries.

4. Social workers in the U. S. Veterans' Bureau hospitals will be responsible to the Medical Officer in Charge and will work under his direction. The function of the social worker in the hospital will be to assist the Medical Officer in Charge in solving social problems pertaining to claimants while they are in the hospital. In solving these problems she will make use of all the local social service agencies that may be available, as in the manner prescribed under subparagraph (e) of paragraph 3, as related to Regional Offices. The social worker in the hospital will also utilize psychiatric social workers in regional offices in solving any social problem requiring the assistance of the regional office setup, and will establish a close cooperation between the hospital and the psychiatric social workers in the regional offices. The hospital social workers will utilize the services of regional office social workers in the adjustment of any social problem requiring such joint effort, and a close, flexible, and effective cooperation between social workers in hospitals and regional offices will always be the aim.

5. When, for good reason -- such as possibility of effecting economy in travel, or when it is considered advisable to utilize the services of the same social worker who had contacted the claimant during hospitalization in making any further necessary contacts with the claimant or his family after the claimant's discharge from hospital -- the Regional Office desires to use the services of a hospital social worker rather than those of a Regional Office worker, the Regional Medical Officer, through the Regional Manager, will request the Medical Officer in Charge of the hospital concerned to loan the services of the social service worker for the duty described. The Medical Officer in Charge of the hospital will approve such requests, whenever reasonable or possible; and, upon receipt of his approval, the Regional Office will issue a letter of authority to the social service worker designated, and will enclose round trip transportation, if necessary, to accomplish the desired duty. All necessary and authorized traveling expenses incurred during such service by the designated hospital social worker, will be charged to the Regional Office that authorized such service, and vouchers covering such travel will be audited and paid by that Regional Office.

6. When an insane patient in a U. S. Veterans' hospital has effected such improvement as to justify consideration of the propriety of his being furloughed, the Medical Officer in Charge of the hospital will, at a time sufficiently far in advance of the contemplated furlough, request the regional office of the region to which the claimant is to be returned to supply full information regarding the home conditions of the patient in question, the attitude of the family toward the patient and the projected furlough, and the ability of the legal guardian, if there is one, properly to care for the patient in the community to which it is contemplated to furlough him. The regional office will secure this desired information as promptly as possible through the regional office psychiatric social worker; and such report will serve to guide the judgment of the Medical Officer in Charge of the hospital in deciding whether furlough is feasible or advisable. If he decides that furlough is in order, the Medical Officer in Charge will promptly notify the regional office aforesaid sufficiently in advance of the contemplated date of furlough which should be stated in the notice. Upon receipt of this information, the regional office psychiatric social worker will take all necessary and appropriate action toward assisting the claimant to make a satisfactory social adjustment in the community to which he is returned. Such action will include any necessary cooperation with the employment officer and guardianship officer of the regional office. The ideal to be realized as far as intelligent, concerted effort can accomplish it, is to get the patient socially and industrially adjusted as satisfactorily as possible, so that this return to hospital may not be necessitated. In proceeding under the provisions of General Order No. 331, "Discharge of Insane Patients From Hospitals," particularly paragraphs 3 and 4 thereof, relative to procedure in the event of parole or of elopement, the Medical Officer in Charge will keep the regional office of the territory in which the patient or guardian lives notified of any action he proposes to take, and will cooperate with, and act upon the basis of information received from such regional offices concerned. Such cooperation will allow of the proper information being brought to the notice of the psychiatric social worker and guardianship officer in such regional offices and will enable them to take any necessary and appropriate action.

FRANK T. HINES,
Director.