

Guidance for Determining Oncology Social Work Staffing Standards

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Thanks to the 80 applicants who applied to AOSW's **Project to Assure Quality Cancer Care (APAQCC)**, AOSW now possesses data to establish a baseline for social work staffing ratios across the US. These data allow you to compare social work staffing at your institution/cancer program to other similar institutions in terms of type of cancer program and size.

First, determine the American College of Surgeon's Commission on Cancer categorization of your institution/cancer program by going to the website listed below and entering the name of your institution.

http://datalinks.facs.org/cpm/CPMApprovedHospitals_Search.htm

Meanwhile, contact your cancer registrar or program database manager and determine:

- 1) How many social work FTEs are dedicated specifically to oncology.
- 2) How many "analytic cases" were counted at your institution/program in 2012 or 2013. Analytic cases are defined as "cases diagnosed and/or receiving all or part of the first course of therapy at a facility."
- 3) How many out-patient visits were tabulated in your institution/cancer program in 2012 or 2013. Out-patient visits may include but are not limited to scheduled clinic appointments, scheduled out-patient procedures, infusion, or radiation appointments.

Divide the number of ANALYTIC CASES by the number of SOCIAL WORK FTEs. The number of analytic cases divided by the number of oncology social work FTEs can be reported as the ratio of 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of analytic cases per year. This ratio is your institution's social work **CASELOAD**.

Social work **CASELOAD** indicates the number of current or potential number of cases that any one oncology social worker carries or could potentially carry. Does the CASELOAD you calculated for your program seem reasonable to you? To your colleagues? To your patients?

Divide the number of OUT-PATIENT VISITS by the number of SOCIAL WORK FTEs. The number of out-patient visits divided by the number of oncology social work FTEs can be reported as the ratio of 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of out-patient visits per year. This ratio is your institution's social work **COVERAGE**.

Social work **COVERAGE** indicates the number of touch-points or potential touch-points for social work contact. Each and every out-patient visit, be it for a clinic visit, blood draw, procedure, or therapy represents an opportunity for identifying and responding to patient and family needs. The answer you calculated for your program indicates the number of opportunities that one oncology social worker (working full-time) has to connect with patients in a year. Can you see that many patients? What happens to those you don't see? What are the costs to the

hospital for not seeing patients in terms of *missed appointments*, *hospital re-admissions*, or *patient non-adherence* to treatment regimen?

Click on the hyperlinks at the end of this article to see how your institution's social work **CASELOAD** and **COVERAGE** compares to others. Within your category of program type, look for programs that are closely similar to yours in terms of number of social work FTEs, analytic cases, and/or out-patient visits.

Thanks to all those APAQCC applicants who took the time to track down these important data. They do not suggest what oncology social work staffing standards should be, but at least provide insight into what they currently are at cancer-treating programs across the United States (and a couple from Canada, as well). Hopefully this report will stimulate useful dialogue about the delivery of quality cancer care at your institution.

Finally, please post your thoughts, comments, and feedback on these results on SWON! Let AOSW leadership know what these findings mean to you!

[**Table 1. Social work staffing ratios for NCI-Designated Cancer Programs \(NCIP\)**](#)

[**Table 2. Social work staffing ratios for Comprehensive Community Cancer Programs \(CCCP\)**](#)

[**Table 3. Social work staffing ratios for Community Cancer Programs \(CCP\)**](#)

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Table 1. Social work staffing ratios for NCI-Designated Cancer Programs (NCIP)

Institution Type Code	# of Oncology Social Work FTEs	# of Analytic Cases/year	CASELOAD	Out-patient Visits/year	COVERAGE
NCIP1	8.7	3,381	1:389	42,962	1:4,938
NCIP2	7.0	2,744	1:392	63,237	1:9,034
NCIP3	10.0	4,126	1:413	36,000	1:3,600
NCIP4	1.0	445	1:445	5,879	1:5,879
NCIP5	1.0	559	1:559	6,997	1:6,997
NCIP6	4.8	2,684	1:559	36,899	1:7,687
NCIP7	9.0	6,363	1:707	237,084	1:26,343
NCIP8	25.0	25,000	1:1,000	169,000	1:6,760
NCIP9	3.0	4,046	1:1,349	21,280	1:7,093
NCIP10	62.0	120,000	1:1,935	1,338,706	1:21,592
NCIP11	16.0	32,978	1:2,061	104,503	1:6,531
AVERAGE	13.4	18,393	1:892	187,504	1:9,678

CASELOAD is number of analytic cases divided by number of Oncology Social Work FTEs:

Reported as 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of analytic cases per year

Best case (NCIP1) -- 1:389; Worst case (NCIP11) -- 1:2,061

COVERAGE is number of out-patient visits divided by number of Oncology Social Work

FTEs: Reported as 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of out-patient visits per year

Best case (NCIP3) – 1:3,600; Worst case (NCIP7) – 1:26,343

Table 2. Social work staffing ratios for Comprehensive Community Cancer Programs (CCCP)

Institution Type Code	# of Oncology Social Work FTEs	# of Analytic Cases/year	CASELOAD	# of Out-patient Visits/year	COVERAGE
CCCP1	2.0	262	1:131	2,910	1:1,455
CCCP2	2.0	553	1:277	26,251	1:13,126
CCCP3	2.0	792	1:396	16,152	1:8,076
CCCP4	8.1	3,724	1:460	1,024,095	1:126,431
CCCP5	1.0	484	1:484	5,780	1:5,780
CCCP6	5.0	2,790	1:558	10,087	1:2,017
CCCP7	1.0	566	1:566	NR	NR
CCCP8	2.0	1,190	1:595	NR	NR
CCCP9	2.0	1,220	1:610	39,544	1:19,772
CCCP10	1.0	645	1:645	3,281	1:3,281
CCCP11	1.0	700	1:700	8,500	1:8,500
CCCP12	1.0	755	1:755	18,311	1:18,311
CCCP13	2.0	1,543	1:772	37,571	1:18,786
CCCP14	1.0	793	1:793	13,576	1:13,576
CCCP15	2.0	1,647	1:824	5,876	1:2,938
CCCP16	1.0	829	1:829	15,039	1:15,039
CCCP17	0.8	723	1:904	22,316	1:27,895
CCCP18	2.0	1,978	1:989	64,158	1:32,079
CCCP19	2.0	1,999	1:1,000	22,330	1:11,165
CCCP20	1.0	1,144	1:1,144	7,714	1:7,714
CCCP21	2.0	2,846	1:1,423	52,333	1:26,167
CCCP22	2.0	3,045	1:1,523	23,037	1:11,519
CCCP23	0.9	1,827	1:2,030	23,041	1:25,601
CCCP24	1.0	3,014	1:3,014	14,071	1:14,071
CCCP25	3.4	1,093	1:321	6,027	1:1,773
CCCP26	2.0	NR	NR	NR	NR
CCCP27	32.0	NR	NR	NR	NR
CCCP28	1.0	NR	NR	NR	NR
AVERAGE	3.0	1,477	1:870	63,565	1:18,047

NR=Not Reported

CASELOAD is number of analytic cases divided by number of Oncology Social Work FTEs:

Reported as 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of analytic cases per year

Best Case (CCCP1) – 1:131; Worst Case (CCCP24) – 1:3,014

COVERAGE is number of out-patient visits divided by number of Oncology Social Work

FTEs: Reported as 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of out-patient visits per year

Best Case (CCCP1) – 1:1,145; Worst Case (CCCP4) – 1:126,431

Table 3. Social work staffing ratios for Community Cancer Programs (CCP)

Institution Type Code	# of Oncology Social Work FTEs	# of Analytic Cases/year	CASELOAD	# of Out-patient Visits/year	COVERAGE
CCP1	1.0	224	1:224	12,542	1:12,542
CCP2	11.8	2,918	1:248	50,198	1:4,272
CCP3	2.0	500	1:250	13,000	1:6,500
CCP4	3.2	858	1:268	30,564	1:9,551
CCP5	2.8	802	1:292	4,222	1:1,535
CCP6	1.0	355	1:355	1,801	1:1,801
CCP7	1.0	378	1:378	15,000	1:15,000
CCP8	2.0	931	1:466	15,228	1:7,614
CCP9	4.0	1,917	1:479	26,320	1:6,580
CCP10	1.0	479	1:479	20,149	1:20,149
CCP11	1.0	498	1:498	29,714	1:29,714
CCP12	1.0	525	1:525	17,755	1:17,755
CCP13	2.0	1,198	1:599	110,299	1:5,650
CCP14	1.0	600	1:600	9,000	1:9,000
CCP15	5.0	3,179	1:636	84,121	1:16,824
CCP16	0.8	536	1:715	19,532	1:26,043
CCP17	0.5	444	1:888	3,400	1:6,800
CCP18	1.0	1,017	1:1,017	7,265	1:7,265
CCP19	1.0	1,437	1:1,437	12,660	1:12,660
CCP20	1.8	NR	NR	NR	NR
CCP21	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
AVERAGE	2.2	989	1:545	20,192	1:11,434

NR=Not Reported

CASELOAD is number of analytic cases divided by number of Oncology Social Work FTEs:

Reported as 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of analytic cases per year

Best Case (CCP1) – 1:224; Worst Case (CCP19) – 1:1,437

COVERAGE is number of out-patient visits divided by number of Oncology Social Work

FTEs: Reported as 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of out-patient visits per year

Best Case (CCP5) – 1:1,535; Worst Case (CCP11) – 1:29,714

Table 4. Social work staffing ratios for Academic Comprehensive Cancer Programs (ACAD)

Institution Type Code	# of Oncology Social Work FTEs	# of Analytic Cases/year	CASELOAD	# of Out-patient Visits/year	COVERAGE
ACAD1	2.0	540	1:270	4,800	1:2,400
ACAD2	2.0	703	1:352	3,143	1:1,572
ACAD3	4.0	1,426	1:357	26,342	1:6,586
ACAD4	6.8	3,500	1:519	80,000	1:11,852
ACAD5	3.0	1,976	1:659	42,374	1:14,125
ACAD6	11.5	8,372	1:728	203,497	1:17,695
ACAD7	1.5	1,150	1:767	56,941	1:37,961
ACAD8	1.0	1,016	1:1,016	NR	NR
ACAD9	1.9	1,998	1:1,052	35,212	1:18,533
ACAD10	3.0	3,247	1:1,082	77,428	1:25,809
ACAD11	2.0	2,204	1:1,102	23,172	1:11,586
ACAD12	1.0	1,380	1:1,380	11,000	1:11,000
AVERAGE	3.3	2,293	1:774	51,265	1:14,465

NR=Not Reported

CASELOAD is number of analytic cases divided by number of Oncology Social Work FTEs:

Reported as 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of analytic cases per year

Best Case (ACAD1) – 1:270; Worst Case (ACAD12) – 1:1,380

COVERAGE is number of out-patient visits divided by number of Oncology Social Work

FTEs: Reported as 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of out-patient visits per year

Best Case (ACAD2) – 1:1,572; Worst Case (ACAD7) – 1:37,961

Table 5. Social work staffing ratios for all other cancer programs (Integrated Network Cancer Program - INCP, Veterans Affairs Cancer Program - VACP, Hospital Associated Cancer Program - HACP, Free Standing Cancer Center Program - FSCCP)

Institution Type Code	# of Oncology Social Work FTEs	# of Analytic Cases/year	CASELOAD	# of Out-patient Visits/year	COVERAGE
VACP1	3.0	473	1:158	3,486	1:1,162
INCP1	9.0	1,576	1:175	357,061	1:39,673
FSCCP1	7.0	2,299	1:328	44,431	1:6,347
INCP2	8.0	5,500	1:688	100,000	1:12,500
VACP2	1.0	746	1:746	8,650	1:8,650
INCP3	2.0	2,241	1:1,121	10,166	1:5,083
FSCCP2	1.0	NR	NR	NR	NR
AVERAGE	4.4	2,472	1:612	104,062	1:14,451

NR=Not Reported

CASELOAD is number of analytic cases divided by number of Oncology Social Work FTEs:

Reported as 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of analytic cases per year

Best Case (VACP1) – 1:158; Worst Case (INCP3) – 1:1,121

COVERAGE is number of out-patient visits divided by number of Oncology Social Work

FTEs: Reported as 1 Oncology Social Work FTE per number of out-patient visits per year

Best Case (VACP1) – 1:1,162; Worst Case (INCP1) – 1:39,673