

LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS IN HEALTH, 2004

Chapter 4 of 7

Where Social Workers Work

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Chapter 4. Where Social Workers Work

Summary of Findings

- Social workers are employed across employer sectors and settings. This demonstrates the broad need for social workers, but presents challenges in terms of formulating practices and policies that address varied missions, resources and funding available to support social work services.
- A majority of Health social workers (57%) are employed in the private non-profit sector. This is also the most common employment sector for social workers overall (37%). Twenty four percent of Health social workers work in the private for profit sector and 19% work in the public sector. Only 1% are in private practice.
- While a majority of both MSWs and BSWs work in the private non-profit sector (56% and 59% respectively), MSWs are twice as likely as BSWs to work in the public sector (21% versus 9%). In contrast, BSWs are more likely than MSWs to work in the private for profit sector (32% versus 22%).
- Over half of Health social workers work in hospitals (57%), followed by health clinics/outpatient facilities (14%) and hospices (14%).
- More than half work in hospitals in metropolitan areas.

Employment Sector

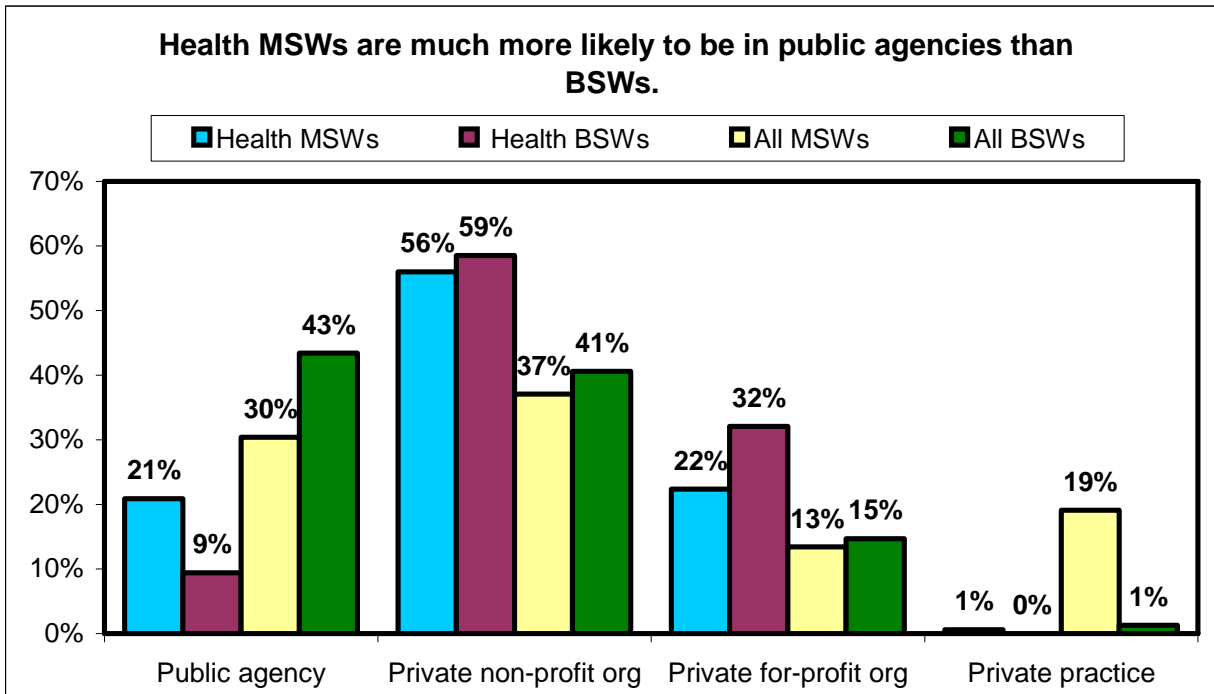
Social workers in Health are much more likely to work in the private non-profit sector than social workers overall (57% versus 37%), followed by the private for-profit sector (24% versus 14%), and public sector (19% versus 33%). Fewer than 1% of social workers in Health are in private practice, compared to 17% of licensed social workers overall.¹

Men were more likely than women to work in public agencies (29% versus 18%), and slightly less likely to be in non-profit or for-profit organizations. Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino social workers were also more likely to work in public agencies than non-Hispanic white social workers (42% and 33% versus 17%). Black/African-American social workers were less likely than white social workers to be in non-profit organizations (17% versus 61%), and more likely to be in for-profit organizations (42% versus 22%). Hispanic/Latino social workers were less likely than white social workers to be in either non-profit (56% versus 61%) or for-profit (11% versus 22%) organizations.

The employment sectors in which Health social workers are employed varies by highest social work degree. MSWs are more heavily concentrated in public agencies than BSWs, while BSWs are somewhat more likely to be in for-profit organizations than MSWs.

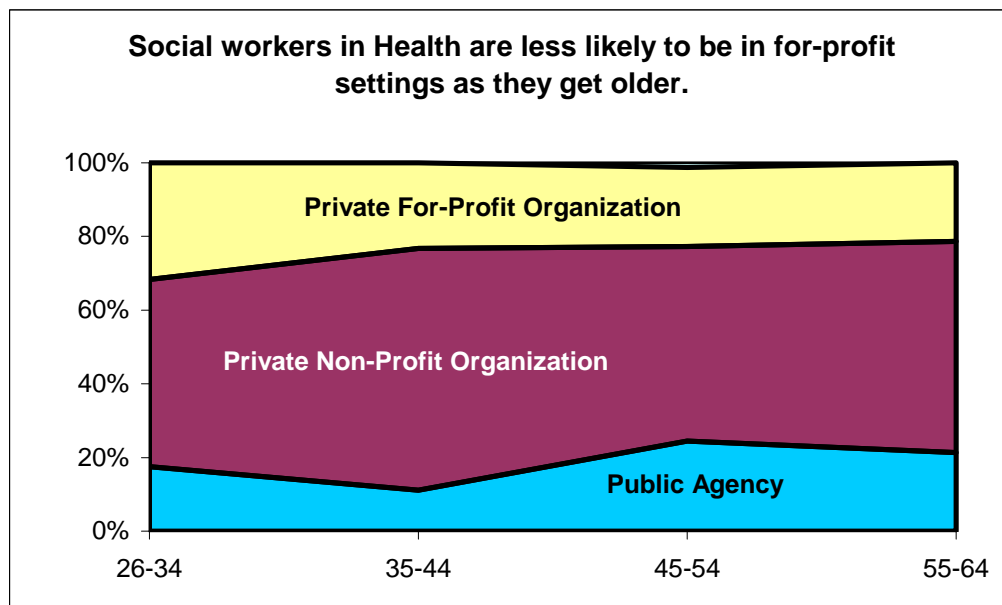
¹ The two active social workers in our sample who practiced Health in private practice were both MSWs ages 45-54. Both reported working for multiple employers – one with a private practice as their secondary employment as well, and one with a home health agency as their secondary employment.

Figure 1. Distribution of Primary Employment Sector by Degree, Health Social Workers and All Social Workers



There is some variation in employment sector by social worker age, as shown below in Figure 2. Although many of these variations do not reflect a consistent pattern, it appears clear that younger Health social workers are more likely than older ones to be in for-profit settings.

Figure 2. Primary Employment Settings of Health Social Workers, by Age



Note: Private practice is shown as a very small sliver at the top of the chart in the 45-54 age range. These were the only Health social workers in private practice.

Settings

Settings can cross sectors, complicating the understanding of the distribution of licensed social work employment by sector. For example, Figure 3 shows that the majority of hospitals (65%) are in the private non-profit sector, but substantial numbers are also found in the public (19%) and the for-profit (17%) sectors. Health clinics are typically for-profit (53%), but can also be non-profit (33%) or public sector organizations (15%). Even hospices, which are overwhelmingly non-profit (74%), can be for-profit (22%) or even public agencies (4%).

Figure 3. Sector Distribution of Common Employment Settings for Health Social Workers

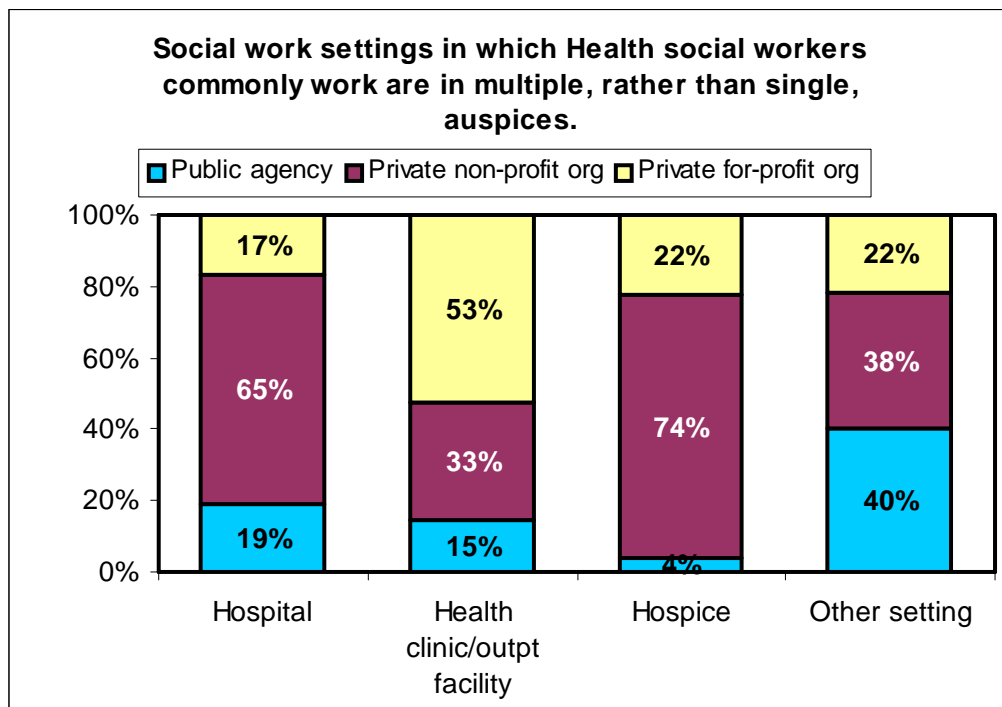


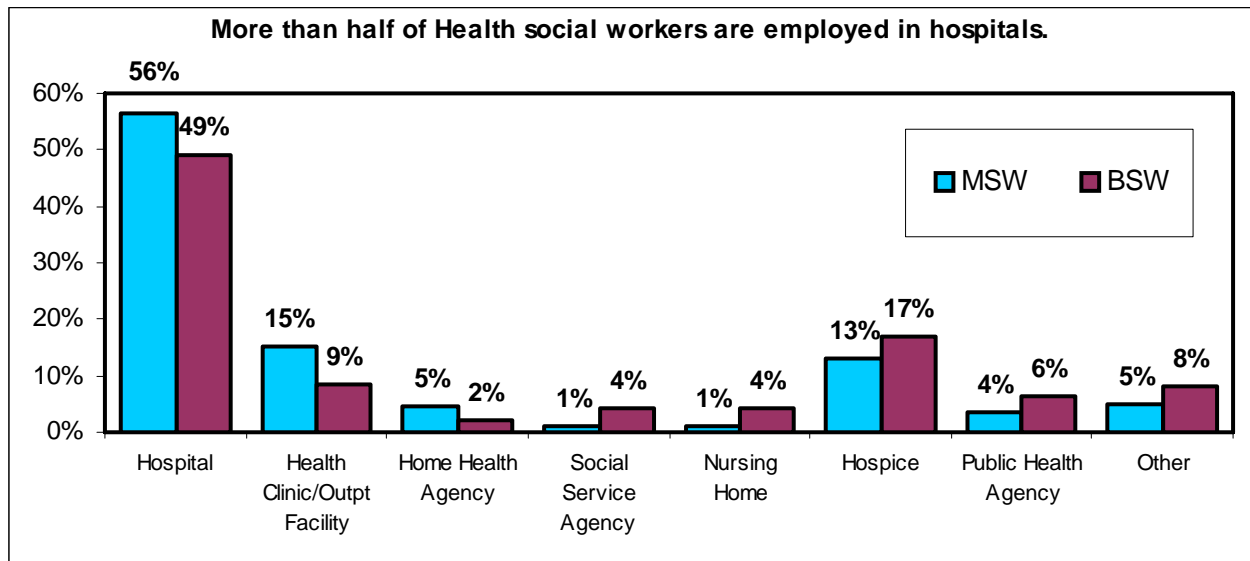
Table 1 shows that hospitals are the most common primary employment setting for Health social workers (56%). Significant numbers of these social workers also work in health clinics (14%) and hospices (14%). Smaller numbers are employed in home health agencies and public health agencies (both 4%). Few additional settings employ significant numbers of Health social workers, e.g. nursing homes, employee assistance programs, case management agencies, insurance companies, social service agencies, other governmental agencies and private practice.

Table 1. Primary Employment Settings for Health Social Workers

Employment Setting	Percent
Hospital	56%
Health Clinic/Outpt Facility	14%
Hospice	14%
Home Health Agency	4%
Public Health Agency	4%
Social Service Agency	2%
Nursing Home	1%
Psychiatric Hospital	1%
Insurance Company/HMO	1%
Other Government Agency	1%
Case Mgmt Agency - Other	1%
EAP	0%
Case Mgmt Agency - Older Adults	0%
Resource Center	0%
Other	1%
Total	100%

Figure 4 shows that Health MSWs and BSWs are both most likely to be employed in hospitals (49% versus 56%), hospices (17% versus 13%), and health clinics (9% versus 15%).

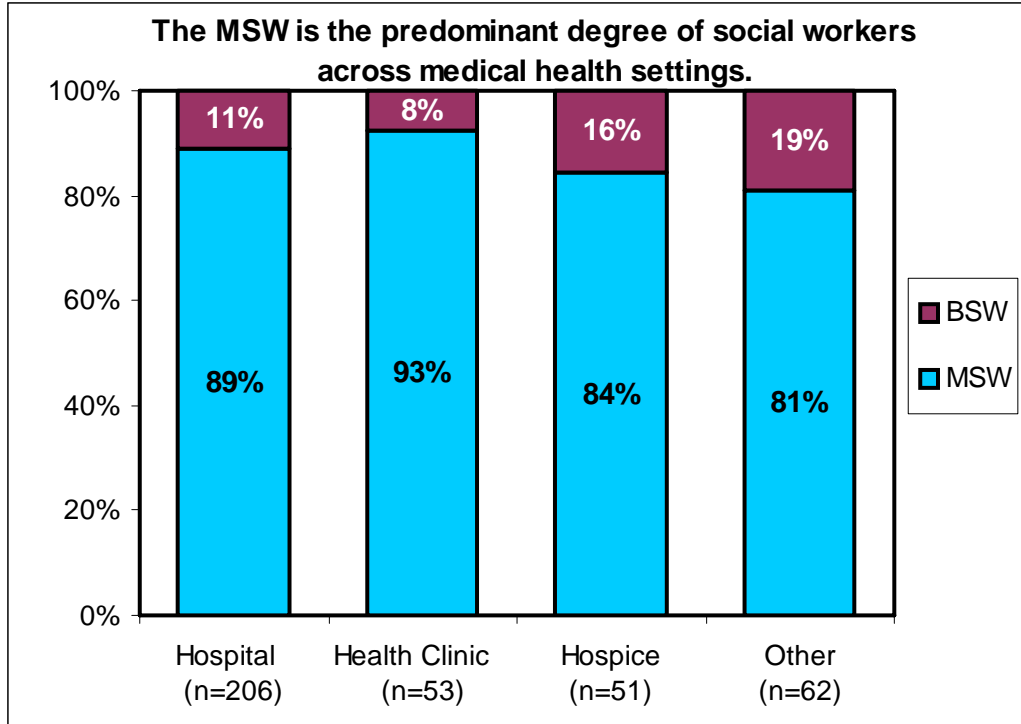
Figure 4. Primary Employment Settings of Health Social Workers, by Degree



As seen in Figure 5, the majority of Health social workers employed across employment settings are MSWs. The number of BSW respondents in both health clinics and hospices was very small

(4 and 8 respectively), allowing us to draw few conclusions about the role of BSWs within these settings.

Figure 5. Highest Degree of Health Social Workers, by Primary Employment Setting



The distribution of licensed Health social workers varies by practice location, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Percentages of Health Social Workers in Selected Employment Settings, by Practice Location

Employment Setting	Metropolitan Area (n=309)	Micropolitan Area (n=27)	Small Town (n=24)	Rural Area (n=5)
Hospital	58%	33%	63%	60%
Health Clinic/Outpt Facility	14%	19%	0%	40%
Hospice	11%	37%	21%	0%
Other	17%	11%	17%	0%