Public Health Social Work
& the Workplace

How can we improve patient care? How can doctors, nurses and care teams in hospitals work better to achieve better patient outcomes? These are questions public health social worker **Reva Kleppel** (SSW '85, SPH '86) examines daily. As part of the research team at Bay State Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, Reva coordinates the Team Study project that looks at teamwork on the medical floors, emphasizing how patient care is coordinated, and how better coordination leads to more effective outcomes.

Reva Kleppel

However, better coordination of care is frequently halted by the realities of the hospital model, involving frequent turnover of care providers. In particular, hospital care providers are medical residents who regularly rotate in their ward assignments. Recognizing these inherent workplace challenges to patient care, Reva has developed and tested tools to help the medical residents and other Bay State Medical Center workers to look beyond the medical model and the daily time shift.

"The relationship [between patients and providers] is a big piece of healing," states Reva. "Healing is about the process, not just the 52 year old female with diabetes. We're looking at the whole person and asking questions to get providers thinking beyond the surface." Because of Reva's work, doctors are now examining their bedside rounding practices, from how nurses and patients are involved, to how patients are discussed.

"This is the perfect combination of public health social work for me. I'm getting the word out on how we can make care more efficient."

The Campaign for Public Health Social Work
www.publichealthsocialwork.org

Furthermore, Reva also shares that a dual degree has a particular staying power. "I worked and then left the field for 14 years to raise my kids," she says. However, re-entering the public health workforce did not pose a problem. "People are impressed by [my MSW/MPH]. I graduated almost 25 years ago, and when people see my resume they say, 'Yeah, that makes sense.'"

BU

Boston University School of Social Work

Optimists wanted.