

# Department of Health Sciences and Social Work

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### **SOCIAL WORK STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Each spring Social Work students elect one Pre-Social Work Major and one Social Work Major to serve as Social Work Student Representatives. These students represent Social Work students and serve as liaisons between students and faculty. The Representatives attend BSW Program Meetings and participate in discussions. They share ideas and questions and report back to students about what is happening in the program.

Introducing our Social Work Student Representatives –

Hi, my name is Jeffrey Knox (he, him his) and I'm the Pre-Social Work Student Representative. I grew up in Galesburg, IL and just came back to school this year. I am a transfer student from Carl Sandburg College and took some time off school when I first got married and moved to Germany. I lived there for three years and have since come back to continue my education! I'm so excited to be able to represent, along with Jora, the Social Work students of Western Illinois. My phone number is 309-368-7622 and you can email me at: [jl-knox@wiu.edu](mailto:jl-knox@wiu.edu) or [jlknox1996@gmail.com](mailto:jlknox1996@gmail.com). If you ever have a question or need a friend do not hesitate to reach out.

My name is Jora Taylor. I am your social work student representative. I am a Junior at Western Illinois University. I am currently majoring in Social Work and minoring in Psychology. I have worked at Warren Achievement Center in Monmouth for 2.5 years and counting. I am always advocating for my clients who live with physical and mental issues, which some may call disabilities. My mission is to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker so that I can help those around me better themselves and help others around them. I want everyone to have a voice in decisions being made around them; as

such I would like to welcome anyone struggling with WIU life to email me at [ja-taylor4@wiu.edu](mailto:ja-taylor4@wiu.edu) for assistance.

We both regularly attend social work faculty meetings and will represent students' interests, concerns, and proposals. I will always advocate for any topics students bring to my attention. I want to improve Western Illinois University and continue to keep it a safe and enjoyable place for all.



**SOCIAL WORKERS**  
leaders. advocates. champions.

## **DIFFERENT WAYS SOCIAL WORKERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

**By**

**Jora Taylor, SW Student Representative**

Social work is an exceptionally rewarding career that makes a lasting difference in the lives of others and entire communities. Social workers stand up for all ages and ways of life, from children to elderly adults. Social workers help to address those struggling with addiction, poverty, domestic violence, homelessness, and many more serious issues. If a person has an issue and seeks help, there will likely be a social worker involved in their recovery. Social workers are behind many organizations that help support people and populations going through challenging times.

Social workers not only help with a person's issues but also help ensure a client gets the care they need by advocating for change. Social workers make an impact through policy change. Today, many social workers work alongside local, state, and national politicians to propose, draft, and implement social programs to benefit society's vulnerable and underprivileged individuals after a need is discovered. Social workers not only assist those who come in for help. Social workers will often advocate for students who are unable to meet their needs and are responsible for free school breakfast and lunch.

Today social workers are more important than ever with increasing anxiety, depression, and suicides taking a toll on people's mental health. Because of the covid pandemic, many are jobless, and some have even

found themselves to become homeless. Social workers are part of the essential workforce because they are essential for helping individuals navigate through the struggles of today's economic and social instability.



**NASW**

**By**

**Shakyra Brown, BSW Student**

The NASW is the National Association of Social Workers. This organization was founded in 1955 and is known as the largest organization of professional social workers. To be a part of the NASW you have to have a membership, which requires a continuance renewal fee to stay a member. NASW has 55 different chapters, Illinois having its very own, and includes other opportunities like shared interest groups and committees. The benefits of becoming a member include, advancing your career by providing different types of education, protecting your practice by offering legal resources, connecting you with your peers in ways like assisting you with finding your chapter, and advancing your chance of becoming an advocate by providing information about social justice.

"It is better to be prepared for an opportunity and not have one than to have an opportunity and not be prepared" is a powerful quote from Whitney Young that the NASW shares directly on their website . This goes along with all the different things the NASW has to offer. The NASW currently offers different training, career fairs, and resources that help people prepare for their careers. Members also have the opportunity to gain more knowledge and skills by attending different training for specific areas with webinars and online meetings. Becoming a member gives you the opportunity to connect with students, colleagues, mentors, retired social workers, and overall good support from people who are working towards the same thing as you.

A huge part of the NASW is working together as social workers and advocating for individuals. The NASW puts together different events that help keep their members updated and educated about the different social

issues that are happening. On the NASW website you can find the events that are scheduled, a big event that's coming up is Advocacy Day!

This year Advocacy Day will be held virtually on April 8th, 2021. Advocacy Day focuses on different social justice topics, policies, and ways that social workers can advocate for change. Advocacy Day is usually held in Springfield, but this year it will be held virtually and registration is free for students! More information about Advocacy Day coming soon!

To learn more - Check out NASW at <https://www.socialworkers.org/>

And NASW-Illinois at <https://www.socialworkers.org/>

## NATIONAL KIDNEY MONTH

by

**Babajide, Oluwatomilola**

March is the National Kidney Month, a time when local communities are raising awareness about kidney disease throughout the country. The focus of this year is on your health and the numerous factors involved in the management of your kidney condition. The serious condition of chronic kidney disease (CKD) affects 37 million individuals.

CKD is progressive and can expose you to serious health complications such as kidney failure and is often overlooked before symptoms appear. A healthy lifestyle may help you to manage the development of CKD and its complications and slow it down.

### **TAKE CARE OF YOUR KIDNEY HEALTH BY FOLLOWING THESE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES**

1. **Meet your health care team on a regular basis:** Staying in touch with your doctor can help you keep your kidney health, whether in person or by telehealth via phone or computer.
2. **Blood pressure management and blood glucose monitoring:** Develop a plan for achieving blood pressure goals with your health care team and regularly check your blood glucose level if you have diabetes.
3. **As prescribed, take medicine and avoid NSAIDs such as ibuprofen and naproxen:** All the medicines that you use must be known to your pharmacist and doctor.
4. **Go for a healthy weight:** To achieve a healthy weight, create a healthy food plan and consider developing a weight loss plan with your doctor.
5. **Reducing stress and part of your routine should be physical activity:** Consider healthy stress reduction activities and get physical activity for at least 30 minutes or more every day.
6. **Get enough sleep:** Target 7 to 8 hours per night of sleep.
7. **Quit smoking:** If you smoke, take steps to quit

It may seem hard, but small changes can take a long time to keep your kidneys and you healthier.



# March is **National Kidney Month**

Get to know your hard working kidneys

## 6 WAYS KIDNEYS KEEP YOU HEALTHY

- Regulate fluid levels
- Activate Vitamin D for healthy bones
- Filter wastes from the blood
- Directs production of red blood cells
- Regulate blood pressure
- Keep blood minerals in balance

## 8 PROBLEMS KIDNEY DISEASE CAN CAUSE

- Cardiovascular disease
- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Anemia/ low red blood cell count
- Nerve damage
- Weak bones
- High blood pressure
- Kidney Failure

## 4 RISK FACTORS

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Age 60+
- Family history

## 7 SYMPTOMS

- Swelling: face, hands, abdomen, ankles, feet
- Blood in urine Foamy urine
- Puffy eyes
- Difficult, painful urination
- Increased thirst
- Fatigue

## 2 TESTS YOU CAN TAKE (BLOOD AND URINE)

**Urine albumin-to-creatinine ratio** estimates the amount of a type of protein, albumin, that you excrete in your urine.

**Glomerular Filtration Rate (GFR)** tells how well your kidneys are working to remove wastes from your blood. It is the best way to check kidney function. Doctors measure blood creatinine (waste build up) levels and perform a calculation based on race, age and gender.

**National Kidney Foundation**  
Learn more at [kidney.org](https://www.kidney.org)

(National Kidney Foundation, 2021).

## References

- National institute of diabetes and digestive and kidney Diseases. (2021). National Kidney Month 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/community-health-outreach/national-kidney-month>
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By Queen Esekhalu

In the United States, March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer is a form of cancer that begins in the lower part of the digestive tract. It is usually slow growing. According to the American Cancer Society, approximately one out of every 23 men and one out of every 25 women will develop this cancer at some stage in their lives. Colorectal cancer has an effect not only on those who are diagnosed with it, but also on their loved ones and families. With proper screening and early diagnosis, the outlook for people with the disease is usually hopeful. In recent years, promising advances have been made in treatment options for colorectal cancer. Participating in Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month allows everyone to have a better understanding of the disease and to work together to make a difference.

### **Facts and Statistics about Colon Cancer**

Colorectal screening saves lives. During a colonoscopy, abnormal cells and polyps may be detected and removed until they develop into cancer. It can also assist you in detecting cancer at its earliest, most treatable level. Despite the benefits of screening, according to the CDC Trusted Source, only about two-thirds of adults in the United States are taking the prescribed tests on time.

### **Additional facts about Colon Cancer**

- About 140,000 people across the country get colorectal cancer every year, according to the CDC.
- For several decades, the outlook for people with the disease has been improving, largely due to screening.
- You can get colorectal cancer at any age, but more than 90% of people who develop the disease are at least 50 years of age.

- Precancerous polyps and early stage colorectal cancers do not always cause symptoms.
- Bloody stools, abdominal pain and weight loss are symptoms of colorectal cancer.

## Screening for Colon Cancer

Colorectal cancer screening tests look for cancer in people who have no symptoms. They can detect and remove precancerous or early-stage cancers when they are easier to treat. Screening tests are often covered by medical insurance. For people at average risk of developing colorectal cancer, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends screening from 50 years of age to 75 years of age.

Your doctor may make personalized recommendations as to when you should have colorectal cancer screening based on the following:

- Family history of colorectal cancer
- Prior screening history
- Previous screening results
- Personal preferences
- Life expectancy

Colorectal cancer screening tests come in a variety of forms, each with its own set of benefits and drawbacks. Consult your doctor to decide the type of examination is most suitable for you.

## Stool Tests

These are non-invasive tests that can be performed at home. You will receive a kit containing instructions on how to provide a stool sample, which will then be sent to the laboratory for analysis.

- **Fecal immunochemistry test (FIT)**- This test uses antibodies to detect blood in the stool and may need to be repeated every year.
- **Guaiac-based occult fecal blood test (gFOBT)**- This test uses a chemical called guaiac to see if there is blood in the stool. It may also have to be repeated every year.
- **DNA test of the stool (FIT-DNA)**- This screening test is for both blood and DNA mutations and should usually be repeated every three years.

If the results of any of these tests are abnormal, your doctor may recommend that you have a colonoscopy.

## Imaging Test

These tests may be performed on an outpatient basis in a doctor's office, clinic, or hospital. They involve a certain amount of preparation time and may require sedation.

- **Flexible sigmoidoscopy**- For this test, a flexible tube called a sigmoidoscope is inserted through the anus and into the lower part of the colon to allow your doctor to look inside. If abnormal tissue is found, it may be removed during the test, and you may need to follow up with a colonoscopy.
- **Virtual colonoscopy**- This procedure uses advanced CT scanning of the colon and rectum to detect abnormalities. Abnormal results from this test may indicate the need for a colonoscopy.
- **Colonoscopy**- The test also involves inserting a flexible tube through the anus, but the colonoscope is much longer and provides a view of the entire length of the colon. The doctor may take a biopsy or remove any polyps found during this procedure.

If no abnormalities are found, you generally do not need to repeat a flexible sigmoidoscopy or a virtual colonoscopy for five years. A colonoscopy that does not detect abnormalities is usually repeated only after 10 years.

## Six Ways to Lower the Risk for Colorectal Cancer

- **Get screened for colorectal cancer**- Screenings are tests that look for cancer before signs or symptoms develop. These tests can detect colon or rectal cancer earlier, when treatments are more likely to be successful. The American Cancer Society recommends tests starting at age 45 for people at average risk. Some colorectal screening tests can also detect and remove precancerous growths (polyps) in the colon or rectum. Polyps are not cancer, but over time, cancer can begin in the polyps. Removing these lowers the risk of cancer. Talk to your health care provider about when you should start screening and what tests may be right for you.
- **Eat lots of vegetables, fruit and whole grains**- Diets that include a lot of vegetables, fruit and whole grains have been associated with a reduced risk of colon or rectal cancer. Also, eat less red meat (beef, pork or lamb) and processed meat (hot dogs and some lunch meats) associated with an increased risk of colorectal cancer.

- **Get regular exercise-** If you are not physically active, you may have a higher chance of developing colorectal cancer. Being more active can help reduce your risk.
- **Take control of your weight-** Being overweight or obese increases your risk of getting and dying from colon or rectal cancer. Eating healthier and increasing your physical activity can help you control your body weight.
- **Quit smoking-** Long-term smokers are more likely to develop and die from colon or rectal cancer than non-smokers. If you smoke and want to quit or know someone else, see the American Cancer Society Guide to quitting tobacco, or call them at 1-800-227-2345. Getting help increases your chances of success.
- **Avoid alcohol-** Alcohol use has been linked with an increased risk of colorectal cancer. It is best not to drink alcohol. But if you do, the American Cancer Society recommends no more than two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women. A single drink equals twelve ounces of beer, five ounces of wine or one and one-half ounces of 80 proof distilled spirits (hard liquor).

**Here is a quiz about colorectal cancer on the CDC website**

<https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/quiz/>

### References

Healthline. (2021). How to get involved in Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Retrieved from

<https://www.healthline.com/health/colorectal-cancer/colon-cancer-awareness-month-when-is-it-and-more>

Team, M. (2021). Six ways to lower your risk for Colon Cancer. American Cancer Society. Retrieved March 12, 2021, from <https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/six-ways-to-lower-your-risk-for-colon-cancer.html>

## PATIENT SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK

*By*

*Ajayi Tolulope C*



Every year, millions of patients suffer

injuries or die because of unsafe and poor-quality health care. Many medical practices and risks associated with healthcare are emerging as a major challenge for patient safety and contribute significantly to the burden of harm due to unsafe care. Each year, 134 million adverse events occur in hospitals in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), due to unsafe care, resulting in 2.6 million deaths. Worldwide, as many as 4 in 10 patients are harmed in primary and outpatient health care. Up to 80% of harm is preventable.

### **What is patient Safety?**

Patient Safety is a healthcare discipline that emerged with the evolving complexity in health care systems and the resulting rise of patient harm in health care facilities. It aims to prevent and reduce risks, errors and harm that occur to patients during provision of health care. Patient safety is fundamental to delivering quality essential health services

Preventable harm in healthcare still remains a major health concern in the United States despite substantial effort over the past years. No doubt, numerous evidenced based, effective best practices related to harm reduction have been identified, but they are rarely shared nationally and implemented effectively among organizations. Hence, reducing preventable harm requires persistent and coordinated effort by all stakeholders, and a total systems approach to safety.

The Patient Safety Awareness Week which is for March 14 - March 20 this year is an annual recognition event which aims to encourage everyone to learn about health care safety. During the week, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) seeks to advance important discussions both locally and globally and inspire action to improve the safety of the healthcare system for patients and the workforce. Patient Safety Awareness Week serves as a dedicated time and platform for growing awareness about patient safety and preventable harm in health care. Some of the patient safety

situations of most concern include Medication errors, Health care-associated infections, unsafe surgical care procedures and unsafe injections practices.

With the aim of improving patient's safety awareness, the National steering committee for patients' safety developed a National Action plan for healthcare professionals to advance patients safety which centers on four foundational and interdependent areas, and it includes 17 recommendations.

The institute for healthcare improvement as part of the patient's safety plan also created some tools to help patients improve their safety. One of which is "Ask me 3", an educational program that encourages patients and families to ask three specific questions of their providers to better understand their health conditions and what they need to do to stay healthy. The questions are:

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?

Ask Me 3 was designed by health literacy experts and is intended to help patients become more active members of their health care team, and provide a critical platform to improve communications between patients, families, and health care professionals.

### **References**

Institute for Healthcare Improvement (2021). Patient Safety Awareness week 2021. Retrieved from:

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World Health Organization (2021). Patients' safety. Retrieved from: [https://www.who.int/news-](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/patient-safety)

[room/fact-sheets/detail/patient-safety](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/patient-safety)

## NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

By

Sasidhar Mittapalli

Have you ever heard the saying, "You are what you eat"? If you have, you may be aware that the foods we consume regularly can impact our well-being. National Nutrition Month was initiated in 1973 as National Nutrition Week, and it became a month-long observance in 1980 in response to growing interest in nutrition. The purpose of National Nutrition Month is to help the public become aware of the importance of good nutrition and a healthful eating plan. The second Wednesday of March is Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) Day, an annual celebration of the dedication of RDNs as the leading advocates for advancing the nutritional status of Americans and people around the world. This year's observance was on March 10.



Developing a healthful eating pattern is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. The key is tailoring your favorite foods to meet your individual nutrient needs. During National Nutrition Month, everyone is encouraged to make informed food choices and develop sound eating and physical activity habits they can follow all year long. The Academy encourages seeking the advice of registered dietitian nutritionists – the food and nutrition experts who can help develop individualized eating and activity plans to meet people's health goals.

In honor of March being National Nutrition Month, it is fitting to discuss the latest nutrition recommendations from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The new guidelines emphasize creating a nutrient-rich eating pattern that works for your lifestyle — fitting in what you like, your way of life, your cultural traditions, and any financial limitations. When a healthy eating pattern is not followed, essential nutrients like calcium, potassium, dietary fiber, and vitamin D may not be consumed in adequate amounts, which can increase the risk of developing nutrition-related chronic diseases. When important nutrients are missing in the diet and not adequately balanced, other nutrients like added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium may be consumed in high amounts.

The three key principles of the guidelines are 1. Meet nutritional needs primarily from nutrient-dense foods and beverages. 2. Choose a variety of options from each food group. 3. Pay attention to portion size. By adopting these goals, the chosen theme strives to help manage weight successfully and reduce chronic disease risk while promoting general health.



## **Statistics and Principles**

- 63% of the American public exceeds the added sugar recommendation of limiting added sugar to 10% of total calories from added sugars.
- 77% of the U.S. population exceeds the saturated fat recommendation of limiting saturated fat to 10% of total calories. This can increase the risk of developing heart disease and other chronic disease issues.
- 90% of Americans exceed the chronic disease risk reduction limits for sodium. On average, Americans consume between 3,000 and 4,000 mg of sodium daily. Limit sodium intake to 2,300 mg daily.

Use government resources like MyPlate.gov to help you determine a healthy eating plan during National Nutrition Month. To understand how much of each food group you should be consuming daily, use resources from USDA's consumer-friendly My Plate Plan at [myplate.gov/my-plate-plan](https://myplate.gov/my-plate-plan) or the dietary guidelines at [dietaryguidelines.gov](https://dietaryguidelines.gov). You can also determine your calorie needs using the MyPlate Plan or seek advice from a registered dietitian.

## **References**

Eat Right, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Retrieved on 03/12/2021 from <https://www.eatright.org/food/resources/national-nutrition-month>

## Departmental Information

### Graduate Programs

M.S. in Health Sciences

(Public Health or School Health)

Post Baccalaureate Certificate in  
Health Services Administration

### Undergraduate Programs

B.S. in Public Health

B.S. Health Services Management

B.S.W. Bachelor of Social Work

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