



Association of Pediatric Oncology Social Workers

Membership in APOSW ... why is it important?

APOSW is a voluntary organization whose primary role is to advance pediatric psychosocial oncology care and promote the interests of social work within pediatric oncology – it is the VOICE of the social work profession within the larger world of childhood cancer. Our purpose is to educate professionals, the general public, and cancer patients, their families and friends.

Membership in APOSW gives social work members, including associate and student members, an opportunity to be in control of their professional development. APOSW membership can lead to an increased awareness of psychosocial issues and support for collective actions among members. This knowledge and exposure can help members enhance their clinical skills, increasing their efficacy in advocating skillfully for the families with whom they work.

APOSW membership can lead to educational, personal, and professional development provided through our networking, conferences, committee work, special interest working groups, and scholarship opportunities. APOSW also affords its members opportunities for visibility, support, and access to leaders and partners who share an interest in advancing pediatric psychosocial oncology care through clinical social work practice, research, advocacy, education, and program development.

Learning and developing are life-long processes; this is true for professional social workers as well. APOSW provides an opportunity for its members to develop a bigger picture of childhood cancer and health care needs of pediatric patients and their families. Additionally, APOSW membership can lead to an increased awareness of social work issues and support for collective actions amongst social workers.

Having said this, membership alone will NOT achieve these results. Choosing to become more engaged with APOSW will help each member benefit fully from his/her membership, and help others realize the full benefits of APOSW. Find a special interest working group, or a committee that interests you, and get involved. Working in these smaller groups provides an opportunity to hone a variety of skills. It is a great way to stay in touch with other members from the childhood cancer community, exchange ideas and find out how other social workers are addressing issues. You may learn something new. It will certainly give you an additional line item in your professional resume.

Evaluation feedback suggests that the annual conference leaves attendees feeling energized and rejuvenated. Attending the conference is a great way to stay in touch with social work colleagues within the childhood cancer community.

This sense of connected-ness is not confined to the annual conference; those who work in small clinics, or those who may work in relative isolation, may find a kindred spirit within APOSW who helps in a way that 'closer to home' social work colleagues may not. The professional contacts are invaluable and we gain access to a wealth of clinical knowledge and useful information.

Basic benefits of APOSW:

- **APOSW members only listserv**

- **Exclusive online resources:** www.aposw.org offers “members-only” sections that provide:

- ✓ easy access to an international database of pediatric oncology social workers
- ✓ information & instrumental intervention resources
- ✓ social work practice tools (including psychosocial assessment, BMT psychosocial assessment, Survivor psychosocial assessment – child & adult)
- ✓ employment opportunities

- **Networking opportunities:** When you join APOSW, you’ll make new contacts on a regular basis. Becoming active in APOSW helps you forge lasting ties with others who have common interests, and these relationships will be rich, ongoing sources of inspiration and ideas. Members can access job postings available through the institutions of other members.

- **Support system:** Members of APOSW can often take advantage of networking and mentoring opportunities with more experienced social workers who provide guidance and useful insights. Even on an informal basis, such relationships can be a source of answers and solutions when you’re facing a challenging situation and at the very least, the feeling that you have a support network behind you can boost your confidence when problems arise.

- **Education:** APOSW offers members the opportunity to:

- ✓ update their knowledge
- ✓ acquire new job skills through seminars, workshops, break-out sessions at conferences
- ✓ online discussion
- ✓ acquire clinical interventions used by others that can benefit the childhood cancer patients and families in their institution

- **Conferences:** APOSW members receive:

- ✓ discounts on conference fees
- ✓ special rates on hotel reservations
- ✓ opportunity to benefit from financial assistance to facilitate conference attendance (Houston Tyler Rothschild Scholarship – restricted to Full members)

- **Development of profession:** Social workers participate in the advancement of the profession within pediatric psychosocial oncology by contributing to:

- ✓ clinical practice
- ✓ education
- ✓ administration
- ✓ knowledge development
- ✓ research

Joining APOSW and becoming involved in APSOW ... *exercising* that membership ... will help each member develop professionally while, at the same time, helping others develop professionally. APOSW *can* be that VOICE of the social work profession within the larger world of childhood cancer.