

## Social Work

### Geriatric Social Work :: A Social Worker's Perspective

Patricia was at the office for her second cycle of chemotherapy. She considers herself a “feisty” 82-year-old woman and she’s determined to beat breast cancer. She lives alone in South Philadelphia and has so many visitors every day, her house feels like a revolving door. In addition to her visitors, she goes to the senior center once a week. Since her first chemotherapy treatment, however, Patricia has noticed that she’s more tired and it’s getting harder to do her simple chores at home. She finds herself skipping meals at times, because she’s just too tired to fix herself something to eat. And even though she drove herself here today, Patricia feels a little unsafe behind the wheel and she’s not sure what she’ll do if she can’t drive.

Patricia mentioned these things to her nurse today and the nurse called the geriatric social worker. Patricia didn’t consider herself “geriatric” at all, but she was willing to meet with her to see what the social worker had to offer. Patricia explained some of the problems she was having at home with chores and meals and at the end of their conversation, Patricia even told the social worker about her problems driving.

After Patricia was finished explaining all these things, the social worker talked to Patricia about a grant to help pay someone to complete heavy housework and other chores at home. Patricia had never even thought of this, but it sounded like a great idea. The social worker also knew all about transportation services that Patricia could use, some she had never even heard of. They also talked about high-quality home delivered meals that could be arranged so that Patricia did not have to bother with cooking when she was feeling tired. After they talked for a while, and the social worker listened to all Patricia’s concerns, they developed a plan on how to help Patricia remain independent and living in her own home.

*For more information about Social Work services, please contact Dana DeDonato, MSW, LSW at 215.829.6379 or visit [PennMedicine.org/Karnell](http://PennMedicine.org/Karnell).*