**Position Request for GS9-1 Social Worker**

We are requesting a Social Work Position as a term employee not to exceed 2 years. This employee will work in the Dom and provide clinical services to individuals with a mental health disorder, substance abuse, and recent criminal justice involvement. Services will be provided to Veterans in the Dom and then in the community after discharge. Currently, Bedford VA does not have specialized services for this vulnerable population, nor does it offer any transition support services for Veterans being discharged from the Dom into the community. This request is being made to deliver services as part of a randomized control trial comparing an intervention called *Maintaining Independence and Sobriety through Systems Integration, Outreach and Networking- Criminal Justice* (MISSION-CJ) to Peer Support services. Both interventions will consist of 6 months of care for all enrolled Veterans: 3 months in the Dom and 3 months in the community post-discharge. Approximately 110 Veterans can receive care through this project.

This project is funded by VA Health Services Research and Development for four years. Grant funding began September 1, 2020. The grant provides funding for all aspects of the research, except funds for clinicians who get trained on MISSION-CJ delivery. The goal is to train existing staff to deliver MISSION services to Veterans in the trial. Peers can be identified from current staff to help implement these interventions. However, current staffing indicates insufficient social work support in the Dom, which is the reason for the request.

Additionally, the project was slated to begin enrolling Veterans into care on December 1st, 2020, but enrollment has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have proposed to further delay enrolling Veterans in order to account for the current health and safety barriers to beginning this work. The proposed clinical service period is from May 1st, 2021 to June 30th, 2023. We believe this project has a high likelihood of success and will help us reduce the readmission rates to the Dom.