

Advocate Health Care Parish Nurse Ministry

Rev. Granger Westberg, a clergyman with years of experience serving in medical schools and hospitals, first introduced the idea of parish nursing. In 1984, Lutheran General Hospital adopted his vision and initiated the parish nurse program with area churches. The idea seemed the natural extension of the hospital's philosophy of Human Ecology, which is the understanding and care of human beings in light of their relationship to God, themselves, their families and the society in which they live.

Evangelical Health Systems developed its parish nurse program in 1989 following a similar vision. In 1995 Lutheran General Health System and Evangelical Health Systems merged to form Advocate Health Care (AHC).

The Parish Nurse Ministry embodies Advocate's vision to provide quality care to the communities it serves.

Advocate Parish Nurse Ministry currently sponsors 21 nurses in 23 congregations and through its Parish Nurse Network, which began in 2002, offers supportive services and parish nurse expertise to congregationally-based parish nurses within the Advocate service areas.

Advocate Health Care is a health system grounded in the faith traditions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the United Church of Christ (UCC). Our mission is to serve the health needs of individuals, families and communities through a holistic philosophy rooted in our fundamental understanding of human beings as created in the image of God.

We understand faith communities to be vital partners with us in this mission and value the unique contribution congregations make in transforming people's lives for health and wholeness.

Advocate Parish Nurse Ministry (APNM) seeks to share the understanding of health as a dynamic process that embodies the spiritual, psychological, physical and social dimensions of the person. As part of Advocate Mission and Spiritual Care and through partnerships with congregations of all denominations and religious affiliations, APNM works to develop the Parish Nurse Ministry to meet the emotional, physical and spiritual needs of the whole person.

PARISH NURSE MINISTRY: Faith Community Nursing (A Specialty Practice of Professional Nursing)

Congregations, Communities and Health

“At the CORE of every major faith tradition stands an explicit commitment to be with the sick, the poor, the alienated, the marginal, the wounded, and the dying. The commitments are very old, but the implications are ever new.”

*Gary Gunderson
Interfaith Health Center
Emory University*

Parish Nurse Ministry: A Vital Link

The purpose of the parish nurse ministry is to nurture the human spirit through health education, spiritual support and linking the needs of the whole person to resources within the congregation, community, and the health care system.

Parish Nurses Facilitate the Healing Mission of the Congregation by Serving in the Following Roles

Integrator of Faith and Health

In all activities and interactions, the parish nurse seeks to promote the understanding of the relationship between faith and health.

Health Educator

Promotes an atmosphere where individuals of all ages, through a variety of educational activities, explores the relationship between values, attitudes, lifestyle, faith and health.

Personal Health Counselor

Discusses health issues and concerns with individuals; makes home, hospital, and nursing home visits as needed.

Referral Agent and Liaison with Congregational and Community Resources

Referrals are provided to other congregational resources, health care professionals, as well as those found in the community at large.

Coordinator of Volunteers

Recruits, coordinates and provides education and resources for volunteers within the congregation to serve in various health ministries.

Developer of Support Groups

Facilitates the development of support groups and/or provides connections to existing support groups for members of the faith community and people from the external community.

Health Advocate

The parish nurse works with the client, faith community, and primary health resources to provide whatever is in the best interest of the client from a whole person perspective, listening and supporting the client's voice when they seem to have none.

Getting in Touch

As a member of the congregational staff with an office located in the congregation, the parish nurse is available by phone or in person during regular office hours.

For further information please contact:
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