
Memorial Health Care System
Faith Community Nursing

The Faith Community/Parish Nurse Preparation Program at Memorial Hospital prepares Registered Nurses to be able to promote whole person health – **body, mind, and spirit** – within their faith communities. The Preparation Program consists of a total of 33 hours formal training (three 8-hour day and three 3-hour evening sessions). Upon completion of all sessions, 33 contact hours will be earned. There is an application process, including endorsement from the pastor (or other clergy person within the congregation), to be completed prior to acceptance into the Parish Nurse Preparation Class. The congregation is encouraged to fund the tuition for the applicant.

Under the new Scope & Standards of Practice, Faith Community/Parish Nursing is defined as “the specialized practice of professional nursing that focuses on the *intentional care of the spirit* as part of the process of promoting wholistic health and preventing or minimizing illness within a faith community. The setting for this practice is within the facilities of the faith community – a non-healthcare setting – and is not intended to provide the services of a physician or nurse practitioner office or health department.” (ANA/HMA, 2005).

The following guidelines have been established in order for a registered nurse to practice as a Parish Nurse:

1. the Parish Nurse should be a registered nurse (RN) with a current and valid license to practice nursing in the State where the ministry would be established;
2. the Parish Nurse should be an active congregational member in the faith community to be served;
3. the Parish Nurse should have Medical/Surgical, Home Health, or Hospice experience but other nursing experiences considered.

The impact on health care has been steadily documented since the early days of Parish Nursing Ministry (1980’s). Preventive medicine and nursing interventions have improved the health and well-being of congregational members. Potentially life-threatening health situations have been identified and treatment sought. Because the church is a non-health care setting and Parish Nursing is based within church facilities, it should be understood that care provided is non-clinical (traditional hands-on). With an intentional focus on spiritual health, the primary nursing interventions of the Parish Nurse remain:

1. health education
2. health counseling
3. advocacy
4. referral resource
5. utilization of available community and congregational resources as appropriate
6. trainer of volunteers within the faith community.

The Parish Nurse does not take the place of the physician, pastor, home health or hospice nurse but works in conjunction with them to promote whole person health – body, mind, and spirit health.

If you would like more information about the ministry of Faith Community/Parish Nursing for your faith community, please contact Connie Blake, Coordinator of Parish Nursing, Memorial Health Care System at 423.495.6163 or email: connie_blake@memorial.org