

Frequently Asked Questions

*“...I remind you to fan into flame
the gift of God, which is in you...”
2 Timothy 1: 6*



WHAT IS HEALTH MINISTRY?

Health Ministry is the promotion of health and wholeness as part of the mission and ministry of a congregation and the community it serves. Health Ministry is an **intentional ministry of care**—“the intentional reaching out to others by a church that promotes health. Health is understood as harmony with self, others, the environment and God. The motivation for health ministry comes from a shared understanding of the call to wholeness as illuminated in Christian tradition. Health ministry includes the intrinsically health promoting qualities of a congregation and the health services provided with the support of a health professional. Health ministry respects the culture in which it is expressed, recognizing individual and community responsibility for health among those it serves.”

Chase-Ziolek, M. (1999) The meaning and experience of health ministry within the culture of a congregation with a parish nurse. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*. 10 (1), 46-55.

Health Ministries are **wholistic** (with a “w”) ministries. Historically, healing and wholeness have been at the very center of the church’s life. God’s desire to bring us into the healing shelter of God’s love is as old as scripture. Throughout scripture we encounter the concept of “**SHALOM**.” Often “shalom” is interpreted as “peace.” But it has many other implications. “Shalom” also means wholeness, healing of brokenness, rebuilding connections, and being in right relationship with God, with others, with creation and with our own hearts. Scripture takes for granted that we are integrated beings—not bodies we take to the doctor, souls we take to church, or minds we take to school. Scripture tells us we are not separate parts that have been lumped together. We are **WHOLE** people—emotional, intellectual, physical, social, spiritual, vocational people who have been beautifully woven together by the Great Artist! When “wholistic” care is offered, all aspects of the person(s) are taken into account.

Ministries of health might include but certainly are not limited to:

- ♥ Ministry of Visitation with trained visitors
- ♥ Ministry with residents of nursing homes
- ♥ Support for families with children with special needs
- ♥ Older Adult Ministry—visit Presbyterian Older Adult Ministry Network
www.poamn.org/
- ♥ A Clothes Closet that serves the working poor

- ♥ Support Group for Caregivers
- ♥ Care Team
- ♥ Assisting in a Free Clinic
- ♥ Support of a Nutrition Site or Food Pantry
- ♥ An English as Second Language (ESL) class
- ♥ A Prayer Circle prepared to offer intercessory prayer
- ♥ Ministry with members of the military and their families
- ♥ Medical mission trip
- ♥ Making Prayer Shawls
- ♥ An exercise class for older members in the congregation and community
- ♥ And the list goes on.....



What Is Parish Nursing?

Parish Nursing or Faith Community Nursing is the specialty practice of a registered nurse who exhibits a high degree of spiritual awareness and commitment to health ministry; who feels called by God to combine professional nursing expertise with theological concepts to provide wholistic care for a congregation. Parish Nurse Ministry provides a visible expression of Christ's love within the congregation and its community.

What A Parish Nurse Might Do In Your Congregation:

Consultation related to health concerns:

- ♥ Serve as personal health counselor to members of the congregation
- ♥ Blood pressure screening after worship is a great opportunity to listen to personal concerns
- ♥ Attend church staff meetings to identify special needs of members
- ♥ Assist with discharge planning after a hospital stay
- ♥ Identify health problems in the congregation where early detection is important
- ♥ May maintain office hours for consultation

Advocacy for members in times of transition, frailty:

- ♥ Call on shut-ins to check on the services they are receiving or might need
- ♥ Visit in nursing homes
- ♥ Attend doctor's appointments with people to interpret and clarify instructions
- ♥ Act as a liaison between a hospitalized member and the hospital staff
- ♥ Alert the pastor about personal needs of a member
- ♥ Serve as a liaison between the congregation and community health services

- ♥ Inform families of options regarding Advance Directives
- ♥ Assist members in the transition from home to extended care facility

Resource and referral services:

- ♥ Maintain a literature library for members with materials about specific health topics
- ♥ Help a family in crisis with information on community resources
- ♥ Refer members to appropriate health services in the community
- ♥ Act as resource for church staff on health related issues

Education for healthy lifestyle choices within the context of faith:

- ♥ Put up a monthly faith and health bulletin board
- ♥ Provide an article on faith and health for church newsletter
- ♥ Facilitate a series of classes on identified faith and health topics
- ♥ Conduct a Wellness Fair with the assistance of the Wellness Team for the congregation and community
- ♥ Participate in worship as requested by pastor (Service of Wholeness, Minute for Mission, Children's Message, Prayers of the People)

Spiritual Support for and prayer with:

- ♥ Care givers and care receivers
- ♥ Volunteers in health and wellness ministry
- ♥ Members with new family members—birth, adoption, elderly parent
- ♥ Church staff with compassion fatigue
- ♥ Members who have family in the hospital

Remember: a Parish Nurse is not a “Lone Ranger” and should not try to do everything! A health ministry team or committee is essential! The role of a Parish Nurse in your congregation is determined by the gifts, skills, and available time of your Parish Nurse and the assessed needs of your congregation.



What is Spiritual Care?

According to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "Spiritual formation is the activity of the Holy Spirit which molds our lives into the likeness of Jesus Christ. This likeness is one of deep intimacy with God and genuine compassion for all of creation. The Spirit works not only in the lives of individuals but also in the life of the church, shaping it into the Body of Christ. We cooperate with this work of the Spirit through certain practices that make us more open and responsive to the Spirit's touch, disciplines such as sabbath keeping, works of compassion and

justice, discernment, worship, hospitality, spiritual friendships, and contemplative silence." Visit www.pcusa.org/spiritualformation

In ministries of care and health, we seek to create a compassionate, "prayer-full" sacred space where the Spirit can move and provide comfort and healing. Often in the process of offering spiritual care, we ourselves are strengthened for ministry and become closer to God. Some expressions of Spiritual Care are prayer, scripture reading, appropriate humor, music, scrapbooking, the spiritual tradition of lament, and offering a non-anxious, listening presence.



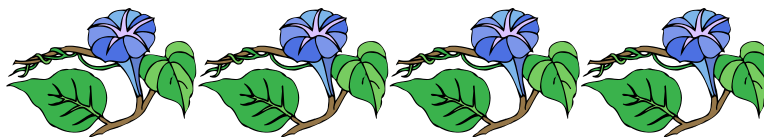
What is Visitation Ministry?

Visitation Ministry is more than a social visit. It is an intentional ministry of care that is offered by trained members of the congregation. Visitation Ministry does not take the place of clergy and parish nurse visits. It supplements them. These trained members can visit and offer spiritual care in homes, hospitals, nursing homes, shelters, and other care facilities in the community.



How can we build relationships with other PC (USA) congregations who are offering health ministry?

Join the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare by visiting <http://www.phewacomunity.org/> . Unite with the Presbyterian Health Network, parish nurses and health ministers throughout our denomination in our efforts to bring healing and wholeness to our congregations and communities! Visit <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/phewa/presbyterian-health-network/> and sign up with the PCUSA's Wellness Connection.



“Let prayer be the morning glory of your day, woven throughout and around your ministry to hold it tightly together!”

Author unknown