

THE FOCUS AND GOAL OF A HEALTH MINISTRY TEAM

What is the focus of the health ministry team?

The focus of the health ministry team is health promotion/illness prevention, known in faith communities as "stewardship of the body." Health ministry reclaims the Biblical understanding of health as "wholeness".

What is the goal of a health ministry team?

The goal of the health ministry team is to develop the skills of all the people in your faith community to see themselves and others wholistically – body, mind, heart, and spirit.

As a health minister you invite God to touch another person through you, to put the person being cared for in a position to be conscious of the presence of God in his/her life and current situation.

The call of the parish nurse/faith community nurse* is to work with the health ministry team in educating, counseling, and supporting the congregation to care for themselves and others (both in the church and surrounding community) so together you can walk with people through the transitions of life, encourage spiritual growth, and find a language of hope in the midst of these transitions.

How can we begin developing a health ministry in our faith community?

- ❖ Pray for guidance
- ❖ Learn about Health Ministry/Parish Nursing
- ❖ There is no one-size-fits-all approach for beginning a health ministry program.

Some suggestions:

- ❖ Do a "Google search" to find what is already going on in health ministry at a national and local level in your denomination as well as others.
- ❖ Generate interest in health ministry by showing the video *"Striving for Fullness of Life: The Church's Challenge in Health"* for those interested in a health ministry. This is a five-part video (23 -27 minutes for each segment) with a study guide. You can borrow this video from Northwest Parish Nurse Ministries at (503) 413-4137. Unfortunately it is only in VHS format.
- ❖ Invite a health minister, such as a parish nurse, from a nearby faith community to share their experiences in health ministry. Such a forum provides an opportunity for members to discuss the challenges and opportunities in embarking on a health ministry program. It is always helpful to get as many perspectives as possible (clergy, teens, nurses, physicians. etc.)
- ❖ Conduct a **Health Ministry Self-Study for Congregations** from Wheat Ridge Ministries (www.wheatridge.org). This can be downloaded for your use.

*A parish nurse/faith community nurse is a registered nurse who has taken a special class to learn about the functions of the parish nurse (health educator, health advocate, health counselor, coordinator of

volunteers, developer of support groups, integrator of faith and health, and resource and referral agent) and how to develop and work with a health ministry team. You can find out more about parish nursing through the International Parish Nurse Resource Center at www.parishnurses.org, or Northwest Parish Nurse Ministries at www.npnmy.org.