In Recognition

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PARISH NURSE RESOURCES MANUAL

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A SAMPLE RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A CONGREGATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM

1. WHEREAS, In the beginning God made human creation the pinnacle act of the Creation; and

2. WHEREAS, In the incarnation, death and resurrection of His Son Jesus, God has redeemed the human race and made it whole before Him; and

3. WHEREAS, Living in communion with Christ, we are called to the stewardship of the gift of life in harmony with the wholeness Christ has bestowed; and

4. WHEREAS, God through health professionals has provided principles and practices that enhance health beyond our present experience of God's gift; and

5. WHEREAS, The higher experience of the gift of wholeness embraces the physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual and relational aspects of the person; therefore be it

1. RESOLVED, That in response to God's will, Lutheran Church establish a congregational health program; and be it further

2. RESOLVED, That we appoint a qualified health committee (cabinet) to develop and sustain this program; and be it further

3. RESOLVED, That we authorize the cabinet to appoint a health advocate/parish nurse and provide the physical resources for effective service; and be it further

4. RESOLVED, That we utilize this program in the ongoing life of the congregation; and be it further

5. RESOLVED, That we encourage all members to participate in this health program; and be it finally

6. RESOLVED, That we offer this health program to the community as an expression of Christ's presence among us.

A SAMPLE PARISH NURSE

Position Description

**TITLE:** Parish Nurse

**PRINCIPAL FUNCTION:** The nurse will develop and implement congregational health advocacy according to policies established by the congregation and professional practice standards.

**POSITION RELATIONSHIPS:** The parish nurse will report to the board or committee designated by the congregation to give leadership to its health ministry – for example, a congregational health and wellness committee or a health cabinet.

In professional practice, the parish nurse should comply with the Scope and Standards of Faith Community Nursing Practice established by the Health Ministries Association and accepted by the American Nurses Association.

In spiritual care, the parish nurse will report to the pastor.

**PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Planning
   a. Conceptualizes whole-person wellness for the congregation.
   b. Makes ongoing assessments of the wellness needs of the congregation.
   c. Develops programs and strategies to meet those needs.

2. Program*
   a. Functions as wellness educator, bringing together body, mind and spirit.
   b. Develops and teaches short courses in health and health care.
   c. Initiates periodic health screening programs in the congregation.
   d. Models integration of mind-body-spirit health and wellness.
   e. Serves as personal health counselor and/or consultant.
   f. As professional experience allows, makes home health visits on request or referral.
   g. As professional experience allows, counsels members of the congregation on health issues.
   h. Interprets the care needs of the physically and mentally ill to family and professional staff.
   i. Serves as trainer and resource person to care-giving volunteers.
   j. Provides appropriate health resources and referrals.
   k. Collaborates with various agencies to provide access to care for the medically indigent in the congregation.

l. Maximizes the health of the congregation as a Christian community.

m. Provides basic spiritual care and support as an integral part of services.

*Some items may require utilization of outside resources if service is not within the parameters of professional education and competence.

3. Professional Relationships
   a. Develops professional relationships with health care professionals, health care institutions and government agencies that are part of the health care delivery and/or reimbursement system.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. Essential
   a. Current licensure as a registered nurse in her/his state.
   b. Membership in good standing in a congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
   c. Spiritual maturity.
   d. Two or more years of nursing experience.
   e. Commitment to wellness of the whole person as understood by the Gospel.
   f. Ability to speak to groups and conduct educational classes.
   g. Ability to identify and use resources, develop programs and train volunteers.
   h. Competence in clinical nursing.
   i. Completion of a recognized parish nurse preparation program.
   j. Completion of theology sessions taught by LCMS clergy.

2. Preferred
   a. Experience in community health.
   b. Knowledge of the organization and function of the parish.
A SAMPLE POSITION DESCRIPTION for a Congregational Health Advocate

**TITLE:** Congregational Health Advocate

**PRINCIPLE FUNCTION:** The health advocate will develop and implement the congregational health program according to policies established by the congregation.

**POSITION RELATIONSHIPS:** The health advocate will report to the board or committee designated by the congregation to give leadership to its health ministry – for example, a congregational health and wellness committee or a health cabinet.

In spiritual care, the health advocate will report to the pastor.

**PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Planning
   a. Conceptualizes whole-person wellness for the congregation.
   b. Makes ongoing assessments of the wellness needs of the congregation.
   c. Develops programs and strategies to meet those needs.

2. Program**
   a. Functions as wellness educator, bringing together body, mind and spirit.
   b. Develops and teaches short courses in health and health care.
   c. Initiates periodic health screening programs in the congregation.
   d. Models integration of Christ-centered health of mind, body and spirit.
   e. Serves as personal health counselor and/or consultant.
   f. As professional experience allows, makes home health visits on request or referral.
   g. As professional experience allows, advises members of the congregation on health issues.
   h. Interprets the care needs of the physically and mentally ill to family and professional staff.
   i. Serves as trainer and resource person to care-giving volunteers.
   j. Provides appropriate health resources and referrals.
   k. Collaborates with various agencies to provide access to care for the medically indigent in the congregation.
   l. Maximizes the health of the congregation as a Christian community.

*The congregational health advocate often serves on a team with a parish nurse who will have the role of coordinating the health ministry in the congregation.

**Some items may require utilization of outside resources if service is not within the parameters of professional education and competence. The specific roles of the congregational health advocate will vary with the education, licensure and/or experience of the congregational health advocate.

3. Professional Relationships
   a. Develops professional relationships with health care professionals, health care institutions and government agencies that are part of the health care delivery and/or reimbursement system.
   b. The congregational health advocate often serves as a member of a health ministry team coordinated by a parish nurse.

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. Essential
   a. Education and/or license in a health-related field. (Some health advocates who work with a parish nurse do not have education and licensure in a health-related field but do have experience in a related area.)
   b. Two or more years of experience in a health-related field.
   c. Membership in good standing in a congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.
   d. Spiritual maturity.
   e. Understanding of and commitment to the vocation of serving others.
   f. Commitment to the wellness of the whole person as understood in the context of the Gospel.
   g. Ability to speak to groups and conduct educational classes.
   h. Ability to identify and use resources, develop programs and train volunteers.

2. Preferred
   a. Knowledge of parish organizations and functions.
   b. Completion of a congregational health advocate class preferably provided by an LCMS-affiliated entity.
OPENING VERSES

L: O Lord, open my lips.
C: And my mouth will declare Your praise.
L: Make haste, O God, to deliver me.
C: Make haste to help me, O Lord.
C: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen. Praise to You, O Christ! Alleluia!

PSALMODY

Psalm 103 or another suitable psalm is chanted or said.

READING

The following or another suitable reading is read.

A reading from St. Matthew, the ninth chapter.

And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he then said to the paralytic—"Rise, pick up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

L: O Lord, have mercy on us.
C: Thanks be to God.

HYMN

LSB 841 "O Son of God in Galilee" or another suitable hymn.

HOMILY

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Let us then confess our sins to God, our merciful Father.

Silence for reflection.

L: I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed by my fault, by my
own fault, by my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

C: The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins.
Amen.

C: I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed by my fault, by my own fault, by my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

L: The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins.

C: Amen.

INTERCESSIONS

L: O Lord,
C: Have mercy.
L: O Christ,
C: Have mercy.
L: O Lord,
C: Have mercy.

L: Our Father
C: Who art in heaven …

L: O Lord, save Your servants
C: Who trust in You.
L: Send them help from the sanctuary
C: And strength from Your holy dwelling.
L: Look upon their affliction and pain,
C: And forgive all their sins.
L: O Lord, hear our prayer,
C: And let our cry come to You.

L: The Lord be with you.
C: And also with you.

Let us pray. O Lord, look down from heaven; behold, visit, and relieve (names) and all Your servants who desire from You the gift of healing. Look upon them with the eyes of Your mercy and give them comfort and sure confidence in You. May Your holy angels constantly defend them from every danger to body and soul, and through Your grace may they be kept in peace and safety; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Those who desire anointing may come forward to the altar rail. The pastor(s) make(s) the sign of the holy cross upon them with olive oil, using the right thumb and saying over each:

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you the new birth of water and the Spirit, and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with His grace to life + everlasting.

Each answers:

Amen.

After all who desire it have been anointed, the pastor continues:

Let us pray. O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments, and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BENEDICTION

L: The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you + peace.

C: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Either LSB 818 “In Thee Is Gladness,” LSB 895 “Now Thank We All Our God” or another suitable hymn may be sung.
Those who are to begin service to the congregation are presented before the pastor.

I: Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, you are to serve our Lord as (a) [name of service or position]. Hear what Holy Scripture has to say about those who serve in the Church:

“But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load.” (Gal. 6:4-5)

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” (Gal. 6:9-10)

“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.” (Rom. 12:3-8)

“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Col. 3:15-18)

L: In the presence of God and of this [congregation/assembly], I install you (as [title of position]) in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Stand
Feast of St. Luke Observation

St. Luke was a physician and an evangelist. He was a companion and fellow worker with Paul (Col. 4:14). Some congregations use the Feast of St. Luke (October 18) to dedicate or commemorate healing professions, including parish nursing, congregational health advocacy and other health ministries, and to recognize Jesus’ concern for the whole person. Ideas are many and varied, but some of the more common activities include —

1. The pastor’s sermon, liturgy and prayers include reference to health and the importance of parish nursing and health advocacy for the congregation.

2. The parish nurse(s), congregational health advocate(s) and others involved in the health program can be recognized and commended to the ministry of Christ’s healing love.

3. Members of the congregation can be included in a litany of dedication and concern for stewardship of health.

4. The music can include “Wholeness in Christ” (the parish nurse song) and/or other applicable music. (“Wholeness in Christ” is available from Concordia University Wisconsin, Parish Nurse Ministries, 12800 N. Lake Shore Drive, Mequon, WI 53097.)

5. The banner committee may want to develop a banner which reflects your congregation’s parish nursing or health advocacy.

6. You may want a door offering or a simple fundraiser to raise money for parish nursing/health advocacy. It is possible that you may qualify for some grant money from the local Thrivent chapter, especially if your parish nursing/health advocacy is involved in community outreach activities.

7. Healthy snacks could be served during the fellowship hour, or the congregation may want to have a healthy luncheon. The lunch could be a catered, provided or shared blessing event.

8. A health fair could be offered. This could be a large event or one with a smaller, more selective focus. The fair could be exclusively for the congregation or open to the public.

9. This would be a good time to begin a wellness-oriented Bible study.

10. Resources available through the parish nurse office or library could be highlighted.

11. Plan to put an article (with photos) in your newspaper to promote your congregation and its parish nursing program.

12. October has also been designated as Clergy Appreciation Month. Pastoral Care Week is usually designated the week following the Feast of St. Luke. This is a wonderful opportunity to include a word and act of appreciation for your pastor(s). This helps to emphasize the team partnership between the pastor and the parish nurse.

13. Altar flowers may be placed in honor of Jesus, the Great Physician, and the healing ministry in His Name.

14. A health event such as a speaker, a walk, an art show by children or adults on a health theme, or a concert (music therapy) may be scheduled as a fellowship event with an invitation to the community.

Be creative. Ideas are endless.
To God be the glory!
1. The church staff commits to personal wellness under the guidance and encouragement of a health professional with expertise in health advocacy (e.g., parish nurse district representative, district health advocate, practicing parish nurse, etc.)

2. The pastor brings the health advocacy concept to a sponsoring group, preferably the board of elders, to study the Scriptural grounding of the program, what the program is, its integration into the present life of the congregation and its needed leadership. Staff wellness practices are brought into the discussion. After study at two or more meetings, the chair asks the elders for their endorsement and their personal commitment to wellness practices. At this point, a health cabinet is appointed and given the mandate to undertake a survey and report its findings.

3. The health cabinet consists of people who have a strong and informed interest in health and welcome its pursuit as an expression of the Christian life. Provide the same orientation to health advocacy as was given to the elders.

4. The health cabinet undertakes a survey which is both quantitative (health needs) and qualitative (attitude, resistance/openness to health practices) in nature. The cabinet summarizes the survey results, identifies the entry point of a health program and sets the first year’s outcomes for spiritual, physical, mental, relational and emotional health.

5. The cabinet reports to the congregation after its Sunday morning services in a special presentation. The pastor’s sermon for the day could ground health advocacy in the Gospel. The focus of the report should be the needs of the congregation and how developing a health program could help address those needs in the name of Christ.

6. The introduction of the health program is put to a vote at the next meeting of the governing body.

7. The cabinet appoints a parish nurse/health advocate and arranges her/his placement in weekend services.

8. The health advocate/parish nurse announces the first congregational health promotion, possibly for the placement Sunday.

9. The cabinet informs the parish nurse district representative, the LCMS parish nurse coordinator or the LCMS Health Ministries manager to ensure that the new parish nurse or health advocate is included in available networking opportunities.

10. The cabinet evaluates the outcome every six months and revises it as necessary.

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HISTORY
The Gospel includes numerous examples of Jesus’ healing ministry. Dr. Granger Westberg initiated the concept of holistic health centers where the team of patient, nurse, physician and pastor worked together to develop a plan for holistic health and wellness. In time the concept of holistic health centers was replaced by parish nursing.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has endorsed parish nursing. The LCMS Health Ministry calls parish nursing “a visible expression of Christ’s healing ministry.” Parish nurses serve in a team partnership with the pastor to care for the whole person, promoting physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual wellness.

Two frequently cited theme verses of parish nurses are —

“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10b).

“And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal” (Luke 9:2).

CURRENT HEALTH CARE AND/OR NURSING ISSUES AND TRENDS
The health care delivery system provides stressors to many, including nurses. Individual situations vary, but most nurses (including parish nurses) find themselves facing one or more of several current issues and trends.

1. There is an increase in parish nursing as a marketing tool for hospitals and other institutions. Is marketing or ministry the real motive for parish nursing?

2. Downsizing and reorganization threaten job security for hospital nurses. Is parish nursing an option or a calling?

3. Health care delivery systems are using more unlicensed personnel to provide care. Does the use of unlicensed personnel minimize the value of the professional nurse? Does it impact the quality of patient care? Could this same thing happen in settings other than traditional health care delivery systems?

A PARISH NURSE IS NOT JUST A NURSE IN THE PARISH

By Marcia Schnorr, R.N., Ed.D., Parish Nurse Coordinator, LCMS Health Ministry
4. Health care delivery systems vacillate between emphasizing specialization or generalization. Is it better to specialize? Is it better to be a generalist? How can nurses remain competent in several diverse areas of practice? How can nurses keep pace with employment trends?

5. Nursing organizations debate the entry into practice issues. Does this debate lead to devaluing the contributions of many nurses? Does this internal debate interfere with broader nursing practice issues?

6. Nursing organizations and academia use endorsement, approval, accreditation and certification to give validation to their particular educational programs. Do these terms mean different things to different people? Are they misleading? Does the dialogue about endorsement, approval, accreditation and certification help or hinder decision-making regarding educational options?

7. Most basic nursing education programs and many parish nursing education programs use a generic definition of spiritual care. How can the parish nurse provide a Christ-centered parish nurse program if her preparation for spiritual care is not built on a solid Christian foundation?

8. Parish nurses seek to be recognized and validated as members of the ministry team in their congregations. Why are some parish nurses hesitant to equip themselves in the theology and spiritual care practices applicable to their denomination? How can parish nurses be part of a team if they are not playing by the same rules?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parish nurses and potential parish nurses are encouraged to consider the current issues and trends and pray for God’s guidance as they consider their calling.

1. While we know that money is important, let us not be more concerned with money than ministry.

2. While we applaud the recognition that parish nursing has received from the secular world, let us not respond by secularizing parish nursing.

3. While we strive to maintain professional standards for parish nursing, let us never cease to value the God-given gifts of others who wish to serve in the health and human care ministry of our congregations.

4. While we recognize that other faith traditions may benefit from parish nurses, let us never cease to build a firm Christ-centered parish nurse program.

5. While we say that we are in team ministry, let us not forget that God is the captain of the team.

6. While we encourage parish nurses to have a quality preparation, let us not be disheartened by the educational debates.

7. Let us remain steadfast in our determination to serve our Lord, Jesus Christ.

8. Let us continue to grow spiritually through the means He has provided.

9. Let us share Jesus’ healing love with others in our congregation, community and world.

To God be the Glory!