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## **Parish Nurses also known as Faith Community Nurses**

### **Role of the Parish Nurse**

The role of the Parish Nurse is to educate parishioners about the integration of mind, body and soul into overall health. Sometimes known as the Faith Community Nurse, the Parish Nurse brings a faith perspective to health care and health education.

Parish Nurses typically:

- Conduct personal health counseling,
- Provide Health Education,
- Are aware of community resources and programs available to promote well-being,
- Focus on treating the whole person, not just the clinical needs,
- Promote health through seminars and health fairs,
- Facilitate support groups,
- Perform blood pressure screenings,
- Provide referral services and advocacy and,
- Promote volunteerism within the faith community.

A Parish Nurse ministry also may use congregational members as volunteers. Parish Nursing is often a catalyst for deeper connections between congregation members. Everyone can participate in the Parish Nursing model of care. For example, volunteers may provide respite to caregivers in the church, or help an elderly parishioner with chores at home.

### **Training and Credentials**

A Parish Nurse needs to be a current Registered Nurse (RN) in the state where the congregation is located and must hold a current CPR certification. Many states have additional suggested requirements. In Virginia, there are courses available through

some hospitals and universities where nurses can learn how to bring a spiritual aspect into their clinical techniques.

### **Finding a Parish Nurse**

Parish Nursing Programs are rapidly increasing - there are over 6,000 parish nurses in America today. Contact your local congregation to find out if there is a parish nursing program in your faith community. You may also search the VirginiaNavigator website, using the keywords *Parish Nursing*, to find contact information about parish nursing in Virginia.

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