



Meeting Spiritual Needs

Catholic healthcare sees spiritual care as an integral and important dimension of our ministry. Chaplains are professionally trained individuals, uniquely prepared to provide spiritual care in our Health Ministries. As members of the interdisciplinary healing team, chaplains are called upon to provide spiritual care to patients and their families. Chaplains also support associate spiritual needs and help build a culture that supports spiritually centered, holistic care. Working collaboratively with staff, volunteers and local clergy, chaplains ensure the spiritual needs of the organization are met.

Part of the Healing Team



Chaplains are an integral part of the healing team. They are an important presence and serve in countless ways to support our Strategic Direction. Their goal is to provide and enable spiritually centered holistic care for everyone in the ministry. Chaplains may provide or be involved with the following:

- Patient/Family Ministry
- Worship and Special Services
- Associate Support
- Committee Membership
- Work Collaboratively with Leadership
- Volunteer Program Oversight
- Clinical Pastoral Education
- Interdisciplinary Teams
- Documentation and Development of Technology
- Support Group Leadership
- Community Service/Outreach
- End-of-Life Care and Support
- Spirituality Initiative Leadership



Framework for Hospital Chaplaincy



Framework for Hospital Chaplaincy

Ascension Health acknowledges and affirms spiritual care as an essential and integral component of our Catholic healthcare ministry. We view pastoral care as fundamental to our identity and a tangible expression of our Mission and Values. Providing quality spiritual care is foundational to holistic care, which treats the whole person; body, mind and spirit. Vital Pastoral Care departments with professionally trained chaplains remain a high priority in our Health Ministries. Well-integrated spiritual care services support our Strategic Direction to provide Healthcare That Is Safe, Healthcare That Works and Healthcare That Leaves No One Behind, for Life.



For Ascension Health SPIRITUAL CARE is...

Fundamental to our Catholic Identity

The Catholic tradition recognizes spiritual care as a key part of healing. Gospel accounts highlight Jesus' holistic approach to those who were suffering, recognizing the complex aspects of sickness. As extensions of the Church, chaplains are specially trained members of the healthcare team designated to deal with spiritual issues. Issues may arise or become more acutely felt during illness and chaplains can help patients and families wrestle with questions of meaning as well as feelings of powerlessness, pain, loneliness and isolation.

Essential to Mission

Our founders saw their ministry as a way to love God through service to the poor and vulnerable. Committed to serving those in need, they founded Catholic healthcare, providing holistic care to all in their communities. Ascension Health was built by women who openly lived their faith and our call is to be attentive to the spiritual needs of the neighbor and the poor and vulnerable. Pastoral Care departments are a visible continuation of this commitment and an expression of faith in service. Holistic care is imperative in our ministry and the spiritual aspect is an essential component of our Mission as well as a trademark of Catholic healthcare.

Effective in Service

Rooted in service, pastoral care is a sign of responsible stewardship. Chaplains' expertise enables patients to surface deeper concerns and articulate healthcare goals. Chaplains facilitate discussions, resulting in more appropriate and informed healthcare choices that honor the patient's values - particularly with ethical or end-of-life issues. Helping patients communicate these choices to family and healthcare teams empowers the patient and limits futile treatment. Chaplains are always available to mediate difficult conversations with patients, potentially reducing financial cost by resolving issues and diffusing unattended emotions that could manifest as litigious issues. Chaplains also support associates during spiritually and emotionally difficult times, promoting staff retention.

Diverse and Inclusive

As Catholic healthcare providers, we recognize that the spirit makes us unique and distinctly human. Spirituality can be defined as the way one makes meaning out of life's experiences. Spirituality provides strength to sustain good health and helps individuals cope with illness, trauma, loss, fear, and life transitions. Professional chaplains, though personally rooted in a particular denomination, are knowledgeable and respectful of different religions and cultural nuances. They provide ministry to all persons,

and draw upon each individual's belief system and/or unique spiritual resources. Our foundational premise of spiritual care concretely upholds the Joint Commission standard which states, "Each patient has a right to have his or her cultural, psychosocial, spiritual, and personal values, beliefs, and preferences respected." (RI.2.10)

Core to Organizational Culture

Spirituality is a key part of our organizational culture at Ascension Health. Professional chaplains are committed to shaping the life, spirit, and ethical development of the organization. Spiritual care supports greater staff cohesiveness and institutional integrity through participation in ethical discussions and discernment, community prayer, reflection and storytelling. Chaplains encourage meaning-making and reflection, assisting associates in connecting their purpose with the organization's Mission and roots of our healthcare system. A spiritually centered culture makes holistic care possible for everyone, translating into spiritual and emotional support for patients and families and an inspired Model Community of engaged associates.