

## **What is Congregational Health?**

The Centra Health Congregational Health Program focuses on reclaiming the role of faith communities in promoting health, healing, and wholeness from a whole person perspective – body, mind, and spirit.

The Congregational Health Program offers resources, education, and ministry opportunities that address spiritual, physical, and emotional health promotion.

The Congregational Health Program offers ministry opportunities that focus on preventing disease and empowering individuals to be responsible stewards of the gift of their lives.

## **Why Congregational Health?**

We are created in God's image as whole, integrated beings-body, mind and spirit. Throughout history, the mission of faith communities has been one of health and hope. However, over time congregations have left the "health" component of their mission to the health care system.

Over the past few years there has been a surge of research on the relationship between religious faith and health. Many people, including clergy and health care professionals, are recognizing the significant role religious faith has on a person's physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

## **How Healthy is Your Congregation?**

Assessing the spiritual, physical, and emotional health needs of a congregation is an important part of the Congregational Health Program. Below are some results from previous Congregational Health surveys:

- 38% of congregation members have high blood pressure.
- 96% of congregation members believe that prayer is important in their life.
- 39% of congregation members find it difficult to forgive others.
- 43% of congregation members do not have an advance directive.

### **Where Will This Impact?**

The Congregational Health Program has the potential to impact all members of the faith community, and the community at large. It can provide:

- A focus and a plan for health related activities.
- It can involve every member of the faith community, finding new points of ministry.
- It can strengthen the Pastor's understanding of the needs of the whole.
- It can be a vehicle to bring others into the faith community.

### **When Is the Time for Congregational Health?**

Faith communities share much in common, yet each one has a distinct "personality," reflecting the beliefs and mission of the organization. When contemplating a partnership for Congregational Health, the following may be considered:

- Is whole person health a goal for members of the faith community?
- Is stewardship emphasized, including the stewardship of life?
- Are members struggling with the myriad demands of modern day life?
- Is the leadership looking for ways to strengthen the membership, and add to the community?

If the answers to these questions are affirmative, the time is right to incorporate Congregational Health into the work of the faith community. To paraphrase John Kennedy, "If not now, when? If not, you, who?"

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