

# **FAITH COMMUNITY NURSING OR PARISH NURSING**

## **Definition from the International Parish Nurse Resource Center**

### **Philosophy of Parish Nursing**

Parish nursing is a specialty practice and professional model of health ministry distinguished by the following beliefs:

The parish nurse role reclaims the historic roots of health and healing found in many religious traditions. Parish nurses live out the early work of monks, nuns, deacons and deaconesses, church nurses, traditional healers and the nursing profession itself.

The spiritual dimension is central to parish nursing practice. Personal spiritual formation is essential for the parish nurse. The practice holds that all persons are sacred and must be treated with respect and dignity. Compelled by these beliefs the parish nurse serves, advocating with compassion, mercy and justice. The parish nurse assists and supports individuals, families, and communities in becoming more active partners in the stewardship of personal and communal health resources.

The parish nurse understands health to be a dynamic process, which embodies the spiritual, psychological, physical, and social dimensions of the person. Spiritual health is central to well being and influences a person's entire being. A sense of well being can exist in the presence of disease, and healing can exist in absence of cure.

The focus of practice is the faith community and its ministry. The parish nurse, in collaboration with the pastoral staff and congregants, participates in the ongoing transformation of the faith community into a source of health and healing. Through partnership with other community health resources, parish nursing fosters new and creative responses to health and wellness concerns.

### **Root Assumptions**

Parish Nursing is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, consistent with the basic assumptions of all faiths that we care for self and others as an expression of God's Love.

### **Mission**

The mission of parish nursing is the intentional integration of the practice of faith with the practice of nursing so that people can achieve wholeness in, with, and through the community of faith in which parish nurses serve.

### **Purpose**

- Challenge the nursing profession to reclaim the spiritual dimension of nursing care
- Challenge the health care system to provide whole person care
- Challenge the faith community to restore its healing mission

### **Strategic Vision**

Access to a parish nurse ministry in every faith community.

The development of these statements were completed at the Fourteenth Annual Westberg Symposium "Weaving Parish Nursing into the New Millennium: Six hundred participants of the symposium participated in the development of this work.