Use of Volunteers

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Objectives

1) Identify ways volunteers may be useful in your organization
2) Differentiate between the roles of the professional chaplains and the pastoral volunteer
3) Start or expand the use of Pastoral Services volunteers
Start with a dream

• **What is your dream for your department?**
  • Every patient gets a spiritual care visit
  • No one dies alone
  • Catholic patients are offered the Blessed Sacrament daily
  • Daily or weekly chapel services
  • If you are a solo chaplain, coverage so you can take a vacation
  • Ensure every hospital in your location has some form of spiritual care coverage
Volunteers can help...

1. Make initial or welcome visits to patients
   - Introduce new or not yet visited patients to the spiritual and emotional care services available
   - Provide printed materials
   - Identify and refer special needs to the staff chaplain for follow-up
Volunteers can help...

2. Extend special care ministries

- **Music**
  - Instrumental – harp, piano, accordion, guitar, dulcimer, etc.
  - Vocal – soloists, quartets, ensembles, etc.
- **Provide bedside presence with dying patients who lack family support or presence (or whose family needs a respite break)**
  - “Shepherd’s Watch,” “No One Dies Alone,” etc.
- **Provide craft skills**
  - Prayer shawls, baby blankets, lap pads, religious items, baby gowns, etc.
Volunteers can help…

3. Provide Eucharist/Communion
   • Offer Holy Communion and prayer
   • Identify and refer special needs to priest for follow-up

4. Build rapport with local clergy
   • Educate others about spiritual care services
   • Promote involvement
   • Facilitate communication
5. Offer administrative assistance

- Making/receiving phone calls
  - Follow-up bereavement calls, updating mailing lists, etc.

- Cleaning out/organizing storage spaces
  - File cabinets, closets, office supplies, printed materials, etc.

- Handling large paper projects
  - Bulk mailings, photo copying/scanning, packet preparation, etc.

- Data entry
  - Updating information lists, inputting statistics, etc.
Volunteers can help...

6. Serve as on-call pastoral support in small, rural or critical access hospitals

- Assist in patient visitation
- Respond to calls
- Encourage and support medical and hospital staff
It takes time…

… but it’s worth it
Elevating Professional Chaplaincy by Working Smarter

• Developing screening tools to be used by volunteers and other clinicians elevates chaplaincy

• Utilize volunteers who have basic training in spiritual care for low-acuity or low-risk patient needs

• Professional chaplains receive referrals from volunteers to address higher acuity or higher risk needs
Limited number of beds, low daily census

Smaller tight-knit community with involved local clergy

Very few codes, deaths, trauma

No trauma designation

Low acuity levels

Distinction of the Small, Rural Community Hospital Not Requiring Professional Chaplains
Distinctions of Hospitals Pastoral Services Requiring Professional Chaplains

- Large number of intensive care unit beds
- Significant number of occupied beds
- Significant number of codes, deaths, and/or traumas
- High acuity levels
- Trauma designation
- Multi-faith, multi-cultural patient/family population and/or a large un-churched population
- Multiple or large specialty areas (e.g. behavioral health, oncology, pediatric center, burn center, etc)
## Determining the Need for Professional Chaplains: the Small, Rural Community Hospital versus the Large, Metropolitan Hospital

### Small, Rural Community Hospital

There is not the same need for Professional Chaplains because:

- Pastoral Services can usually be provided by local clergy and pastoral volunteers.
- No professional chaplain required on site.
- Local clergy can be recruited and utilized for 24/7 on-call coverage.
- Professional chaplain would be available for consultative assistance via telephone, web-ex, etc., as well as, support for local clergy and pastoral volunteers.

### Large, Metropolitan Hospital

There is a need for an adequate staff of Professional Chaplains who:

- Provide 24/7 chaplain presence required if Level 1 Trauma Center.
- Are seen as an integral part of the healthcare team and participate in interdisciplinary team meetings on units.
- Complete required documentation into the EHR.
- Provide multi-faith, multicultural care.
- Respond to all codes, deaths and level 1 traumas.
- Provide formal spiritual assessment and develop care plans.
- Provide care unique to specialty areas such as oncology, burn, NICU, ICU, Burn, Behavioral Health.
- Respond to a large number of referrals, consults and orders
- Provide on-going orientation and training for nursing, physicians, and other support staff related to spiritual care.

Trained pastoral volunteers play a supportive role in these large healthcare facilities, providing “welcome visits, pray with patients and families when appropriate, Holy Communion when appropriate, alert professional chaplains to issues they encounter during their rounds for follow-up. Use of trained volunteers for specialty programs such as “Shepherd’s Watch.”
## Distinctions between volunteers and professional chaplains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastoral Services Volunteers</th>
<th>Chaplain - Usually Board Certified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcomes and introduces patients/families to pastoral services offered</td>
<td>Provides pastoral care to patients/families and co-workers, usually addressing more complex needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screens and makes referrals to chaplains</td>
<td>Completes spiritual assessment to identify needs and create care plan to address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responds to immediate support, prayer, simple resources</td>
<td>Responds to need and develops plan of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Never enters information into EMR/ chart; communicates with Chaplain about patient needs</strong></td>
<td>Responds to referral, documents in EMR/ chart; communicates with rest of care team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part of Pastoral Service care team and volunteer services</td>
<td>Part of the Pastoral Services care team and the multidisciplinary care team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will be thanked and recognized as volunteer</td>
<td>Will be recognized as professional, paid staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Screened” by volunteer directors and pastoral services leader to determine fit for specific task</td>
<td>“Screened” by HR and hired by pastoral services leader with specific job description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service is directed by census list/specific need or patient/family request for religious resource</td>
<td>Priorities determined by patient needs and standards of quality; Works independently to determine priorities within these parameters</td>
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<td>Works under supervision of Chaplain/Pastoral Services department</td>
<td>Works collaboratively within Pastoral Services and Care giving team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral services provides training; may also have Stephen’s Ministry background or church leadership/pastoral experience</td>
<td>Masters degree, ACPE recognized Clinical Pastoral Education, Board Certified or eligible through APC or NACC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-going training with Pastoral Services Department as well as hospital mandatory training</td>
<td>Continuing education required by certification in addition to on-going training with Pastoral Services Department and hospital mandatory training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will serve patients/needs of department only</td>
<td>Will serve patients and serve on hospital or ministry wide committee task forces or work groups</td>
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If your days leave you feeling like this…

Before Work      After Work

…You might need some help
Initiating or Expanding the Use of Pastoral Volunteers
Write a Job Description

• It doesn’t have to be formal

• It should highlight what the volunteer will be trained to do with patients/families

• Summarize the role and responsibilities you anticipate for your volunteers

• There can be multiple variations on the job description as you may have volunteers who serve in different ways
Identify internal resources

- Does your hospital already have a volunteer program?
  - If so, how can you collaborate with the current leader?
    - Share your vision
    - Identify potential cross-over volunteers
    - Use or modify the current volunteer application for your use
    - Collaborate on the orientation and on-boarding process

- If not, you will need to explore ways to start a volunteer program for your organization
Solicit Leadership Support

• Summarize your goals in brief talking points to share with your direct leader and possibly with their leaders
• Outline ways your goals will benefit the overall organization
• Keep it “high level” while being ready to supply the details as requested

• DO NOT SKIP THIS STEP!
Collaborate with HR

• Clarify the application and on-boarding process
  • Background check
  • Interview
  • Orientation
  • Training
External Resources

• Build relationships and connections to identify potential volunteers
  • Communities of Hope
  • Eucharistic Ministers
  • Stephen Ministers
  • Laity from Local Churches
  • Community Clergy
Establish Requirements and Expectations

• Start with what your organization already requires for volunteers
  • Background check
  • Orientation to organization
    • HIPAA
    • Safety
    • Infection Control
    • TB Skin Test

• Consider additional requirements:
  • Recommendation of their pastor or denominational leadership
  • Extended orientation for role
  • Required continuing education
Recruiting Volunteers

• Utilize internal and external resources
• You’ve built a relationship network – now’s the time to use it
• Collaborate and everyone benefits
• Consider free advertising opportunities
  • Church bulletins
  • Newspapers
  • Organization’s newsletters
Screening Volunteers

• Consider the way you plan to utilize volunteers and screen to the role

• If the role includes any contact with patients or families, the application process should include a background check

• Interview potential volunteers
Interviewing Potential Volunteers

• **Describe the role to the potential volunteer**
  • Non-proselytizing
  • Focused on patient/family’s belief system
  • Necessary availability for volunteers
    • Minimum number of hours or shifts per week or month?
    • Required meetings?
    • Required training?
Interviewing Potential Volunteers

• Assess the potential volunteer’s aptitude for the role and willingness
  • Comfort with death and dying
  • Comfort with trauma and/or blood and body fluids
• What is motivating the potential volunteer to serve in spiritual care?
• What training do they already have?
  • Assess training gaps that you will need to bridge during on-boarding
• Are they in good standing with their religious body?
• What previous volunteer experiences have they had?
• What do they expect to be doing as a volunteer?
Prepare yourself…

Sometimes you will have to say NO

Whaddyamean, NO???
Training New Volunteers

• Review interview notes and discuss experience or training gaps that need to be addressed in new volunteer training

  • Start with active listening role play

  • Shadowing part 1—to learn more about the role
Gaining Proficiency

• Shadowing part 2 – shadow the volunteer on routine patient visits to gauge proficiency

• Moving toward autonomy -- When the volunteer is demonstrating an acceptable level of proficiency, the volunteer may now provide this service autonomously

• Continue the volunteer’s on-boarding until the volunteer demonstrates proficiency in their full scope of service (depending on previous experience and training this may only take a few sessions or may take several months)
Continued Education and Training

• Volunteers, like staff, deserve continuing education and training

• Consider offering educational components at periodic meetings
  • Changing policies or deeper understanding of policies
  • Inter- or Intra-departmental relationships
  • Case studies
  • Advanced role playing
Managing Volunteers

• Significant time investment to recruit, train, and retain volunteers.

• Collect data

• Evaluate Performance

• Address Concerns
Retaining Volunteers

• You are making a significant investment of time and resources in the on-boarding and training of new volunteers – Be sure to steward it well...

• Volunteers need
  • Personal attention
  • Continued education and training
  • Regular contact and debriefing
  • Organizational Recognition
Closing – Our Shared Call to Baptismal Ministry

• God is working within all people…infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.

• Our Baptismal call is a call to ministry.

• God has already given His people the gifts necessary for ministry, it is up to us to help people discern their calling, provide formation and then utilize their gifts.
Special Thanks to…

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Fr. Pat Christopher
Priest Chaplain, Mercy St. Louis

The hundreds of Pastoral Services volunteers that serve throughout the Mercy ministry