

Nurses of Faith: innovative partnership between hospital and community

Nurses of Faith is a new internal collaboration developed by OhioHealth's Community and Congregational Partnerships within the department of Community Health and Wellness.

This new initiative partners Faith Community Nurses or, what may also be known as Parish Nursing, with OhioHealth Nurse Educators. The goal is to provide consumers with health education that facilitates higher levels of health literacy and encourages personal empowerment in the management of both health and disease.

With current changes in health care mandates, there are broader expectations for all who are involved; health care providers, consumers, delivery care sites and payers. Hospitals and health care providers are expected to expand care beyond walls and make some assurances that patients are receiving continuing education and care that address health needs in ways that prevent or reduce complications in the patient and readmissions to the hospital.

The vision for Nurses of Faith is that nurse educators who have a wealth of skills and acknowledge, and who grasp the idea of health care within the hospital, will have a natural partner with FCN's who have a grasp on the needs of people in the community who benefit from teaching around their health concerns with improved health and disease management.

Faith Community Nurses working out of one of OhioHealth's Congregational Partnerships churches receive monthly continuing education through OhioHealth's Congregational Partnerships program. However, there is still a challenge to keep abreast of the kind of information that health care providers practicing out of acute care systems are exposed to a day-to-day practice. Many FCN's are retired and thus do not have opportunity to be in contact with the breadth and depth of knowledge and skills that would keep them effectively updated as the nurse educators are; therefore, it is a win-win situation to have nurse educators and FCN collaborate to extend health education beyond walls into the community.

By blending the skills of each partner, there can be the support that the FCN needs for learning and teaching congregants from the most current information; and for the support that the nurse educator needs to understand the community in ways that can reshape and strengthen their educational

presentations, to align with the needs of congregants as they bring their knowledge into a community setting.

The program will be launched in fall of 2014 with a partnership of local FCN managed congregational partnerships and Grant Hospital Nurse Educators. It is a voluntary opportunity outside of normal work hours where nurse educators will present programs based on their respective areas of expertise.