



# PARISH NURSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY WITHIN THE DAY SCHOOL

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Parish nursing is not school nursing, but there are opportunities for the parish nurse to serve within the day school.

The parish nurse must consult the state board of education and state department of public health to determine local laws. Most states require a certified school nurse to be responsible for health records, individual educational plans, and “general supervision.” States differ, however, in the degree to which others, including RNs, LPNs, CNAs, health aides and others may be involved. Compliance with state laws must be maintained.

The parish nurse should be in compliance with the position description for parish nurses and not be involved in skills that would be considered invasive. The following guidelines may be useful in making decisions related to the parish nurse in the school.

## **THE PARISH NURSE IS**

- a visible expression of Christ’s healing ministry
- concerned about the whole person
- wellness oriented

## **THE PARISH NURSE DOES NOT**

- perform invasive procedures
- replace a certified school nurse
- replace the health department
- replace the doctor’s office

## **PARISH NURSING ROLES INCLUDE**

- health education
- personal health counseling
- liaison with the community
- facilitator of caregiving volunteers
- integration of faith and health

*The parish nurse offers a Christ-centered approach, which is consistent with the mission and ministry of the day school.* The parish nurse may supplement the service of the school nurse. In some cases, the parish nurse may also be a certified school nurse. In either case, there is a role for both



school nursing and parish nursing. In some situations, the roles blur. In other situations, they are distinctively different.

## HEALTH EDUCATION IS OFFERED THROUGH

- classroom presentations
- individual conversations
- exhibits/displays
- resource library (print and audiovisuals)
- newsletter articles
- handouts and flyers
- consultation to staff
- staff development classes, including those mandated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- wellness (health) fairs (age-specific or general, topical or eclectic)
- other

*Themes may include* nutrition, handwashing, age-appropriate first aid, safety, dental health, weather related health/safety, pet safety, how to use 911, age-appropriate biblical sex education and others.

## HEALTH COUNSELING IS OFFERED THROUGH

- screening programs (e.g., lice, height/weight, vision, hearing, scoliosis, etc.)
- wellness fairs (e.g., feelings, stress, others)
- support groups (e.g., grief, dealing with divorce, stress management)
- individual conferences with students and/or families
- assistance to faculty with student health needs
- other

## LIAISON TO THE COMMUNITY INCLUDES

- finding resources in the community for special needs
- networking with county health departments for immunization clinics
- serving as an advocate for the student with health care providers
- other

## FACILITATING CAREGIVING VOLUNTEERS INCLUDES

- increasing the students' and staff's awareness of special opportunities to care and share with others
- stimulating sensitivity to special needs
- coordinating collections for special programs related to health and human care
- organizing servant events
- other

## INTEGRATING FAITH AND HEALTH INCLUDES

- providing a Christ-centered approach to all other services
- encouraging stewardship of God's gift of health
- teaching sex education and other classes from a biblical foundation
- demonstrating a Christian lifestyle
- other

## PARISH NURSES ALSO PROVIDE FOR THE STAFF THROUGH

- required in-services (e.g., bloodborne pathogens, first aid, etc.)
- serving their health and wellness needs
- leading in-services on health or human care topics (e.g., abuse, disaster planning, conflict management, etc.)
- networking with governmental agencies to maintain compliance with health-related regulations
- monitoring environment for safety hazards
- reviewing first aid kits and related supplies
- maintaining compliance with state requirements regarding medications in schools

*Many of the students in our schools are from unchurched families or from families that are less active. The parish nurse has the opportunity to witness to students and their families as they communicate about basic health needs.*

This outline is offered as a guideline for parish nurses who may be working with students and staff in the day school. Modifications may be made by the parish nurse who elects to provide a service to families who are home schooling. It is always important to comply with local laws and to note those areas that require a certified school nurse. Contact your local health department and board for education to keep current on requirements.

