

Parish Nurse Fact Sheet

What is a PARISH NURSE?

A parish nurse is a registered nurse with specialized knowledge who is called to ministry and affirmed by a faith community to promote health, healing and wholeness.

THE ROLE OF THE PARISH NURSE

The role of the parish nurse is to promote the integration of faith and health in a variety of ways that reflect the context of the faith community. Specific examples include:

- health advocacy
- health counselling
- health education
- resource referral

The above definition of the parish nurse was developed by the **Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry**. Although it is short, it was debated and thoughtfully and prayerfully considered for many months. Each word is important.

Registered Nurse: A parish nurse must be registered in the province in which the nurse practises. The nurse's license or certificate of competence must be valid and current. This ensures that the public is receiving safe and competent care.

Specialized knowledge: The parish nurse must have specialized knowledge which meets the criteria of the core learning competencies developed by the Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry. Across this country there are several programs with relevant curriculum to provide this specialized knowledge.

Called to ministry: Although nursing itself is a vocation or "call," parish nursing ministry is a call to a specialized practice. The nurse is called by God to this special service. It is a step in one's faith journey that brings the nurse to parish nursing ministry.

Affirmed by a faith community: Although parish nurses are registered, educated and aware of God's call, the parish nurse must also be called by the faith community. By calling the parish nurse to serve the faith community, the nurse becomes affirmed as the parish nurse thus validating the nurse's call to ministry.

To promote healing and wholeness: This is the mandate of the parish nurse in the faith community. The parish nurse needs a personal understanding of the theology of health, healing and wholeness in the context of the faith community being served recognizing that theology differs from individual to individual even within a denomination.

For further information about parish nursing ministry in Canada, including education programs, core learning competencies, standards of practice and other work of the Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry, please go to www.CAPNM.ca.