



Some Myths about Health Ministry

- Myth 1: "A congregation needs to have a parish nurse to have a health ministry."*
Though having a parish nurse to lead a health ministry in a congregation may be helpful, it is not necessary. This is a ministry of the congregation, not of one person.
- Myth 2: "Liability for health ministry makes it prohibitively expensive. And health ministry opens the congregation up to malpractice suits."*
A congregation's current liability policy will probably cover a health ministry at no additional cost when they are told that no invasive procedures will be performed and are given a description of the program.
- Myth 3: "Addressing health is not part of the mission of the Church. It's not our job."*
Jesus sent his disciples to preach, teach and heal. Being a caring, healing community is the work of the church. The health care system can't do what the church can.
- Myth 4: "Health ministry will impede the relationship between the Rector and the parishioners."*
Ministry by all of us increases the ministry of all of us. Skilled health ministers work with the clergy, not instead of them. It's a team effort.
- Myth 5: "We already have a visitation program, and LEVs. Won't this just be the same thing?"*
Pastoral visitation is part of health ministry, but health ministry also includes health education and promotion, as well as advocacy and referral.
- Myth 6: "Parish nurses only function as blood pressure monitors on Sunday mornings."*
Health ministers do much more – or they can do much more. But saving someone from having a stroke might be reason enough to have a health ministry!
- Myth 7: "Getting a health ministry started is hard. So little has been written about it."*
More and more information is available about health ministry. Check out the website of National Episcopal Health Ministries and click on "publications" then "educational materials." Search the internet for health ministry and parish nursing will also lead you to information.
- Myth 8: "Health ministry provides primary care on site at the local congregation."*
If a congregation is so led, there might be a clinic at the parish. But most of health ministry involves health related education, counseling and referral offered in the context of Christian faith.
- Myth 9: "Everyone in this parish already has a doctor and health insurance."*
Health ministry does not replace the current health care system; it augments it by helping people to see the connection between their faith and their health.
- Myth 10: "Our parish is too large (too small) to have a health ministry."*
Any size congregation can have a health ministry. It does not depend on financial or professional resources. It does depend on vision and passion for meeting human need.