

Parish Nurse/Health Ministry Best Practices

Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux

Parish Nurse/Health Ministry Best Practices

Q – Who can be a Parish Nurse and what do they do?

A - A Parish nurse’s role focuses on personal health counseling, health education, referrals, wellness promotions, advocacy and the integration of faith and healing. A parish nurse can be a paid employee or volunteer of the parish. A parish nurse can also be contracted through a local healthcare institution.

Q – Does starting a parish nurse/health ministry program bring additional risk to our parish’s liability insurance program?

A – Your exposure to loss increases anytime a new program is started within the parish. However, if parish nurse programs adhere to the best practice guidelines and do not perform any “hands on” type nursing activities, your increased exposure is minimal.

Q – What procedures must be in place before starting a parish nurse/health ministry program at my parish?

A - By being aware of and following the “best practices” for parish nurse/health ministry programs shown below and understanding the detailed information available in the Catholic Mutual Guidelines for Parish Nurse/Health Ministry Programs, you will be better prepared to provide a well-run, effective program at your parish. To access this information, log onto the Catholic Mutual website at www.catholicmutual.org, Login:0352hou Password: service, and select Risk Management Info.

CHECKLIST

- **Qualifications**
 - Graduate of an accredited school or college of nursing
 - Currently licensed as a professional registered nurse (RN)
 - 3 years or more of nursing experience in a clinical setting
 - Possession of a valid driver’s license
 - Credential and background check conducted

- **Parish Nurse Program Partnered with Healthcare Institution** (if applicable)
 - Healthcare Institution Hold Harmless Indemnity Agreement* completed
 - Certificate of Insurance obtained from Healthcare Institution naming the parish and Arch/diocese as additional insured

- **Transportation**
 - Verified minimum auto liability limits of \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per accident
 - Completed a motor vehicle record check (MVR)
 - Has taken *Be Smart – Drive Safe* online defensive driving course
 - Has taken *Church Transportation – Is It Necessary and Ministry-Based?*

- **Professional Boundaries**

Parish nurse is aware he/she cannot provide medical diagnosis, only referrals to physician or other healthcare provider as needed.

Parish nurse is aware he/she cannot dispense medications

Parish nurse is aware to report abuse involving a minor or vulnerable adult to the appropriate governmental agency

Parish nurse is aware to keep confidential records in locked cabinet in accordance with HIPAA