

Ministry Report

News/Views
From the Franciscan Sisters
of Christian Charity
Sponsored Ministries, Inc.
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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Sponsored Ministries is to carry out the commitment of the Sponsor to the healing and educational mission of the Catholic Church through the provision of quality health care and educational services.

In a spirit of partnership with dedicated religious and lay leaders, the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Sponsored Ministries will strengthen the Sponsor's commitment by leading change, ensuring stewardship of resources and integrating mission and values.

Is Spirituality A Social Determinant of Health?

By Sister Kay Klackner, OSF, Vice President of Mission

Social determinants are the conditions in the environment where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks. Typical examples are access to food, transportation, education, housing, polluted water, discrimination, and the list can go on. What would create the best environment for the human beings in this area to flourish?

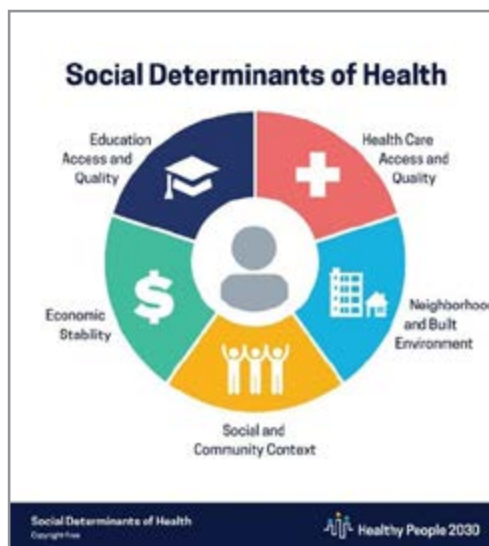
In a cyclic pattern, healthcare facilities engage community partners to survey and interview people within their radius of influence to determine what social needs exist in these neighborhoods. Goals, strategies, and assessments are created to improve the health of the specific population.

Should public health include spirituality as a social determinant? Researchers have analyzed many examples of the role spirituality plays in healing outcomes. Good

health outcomes include the whole person—mind, spirit, and body. There are many examples and stories of those who benefitted from spiritual care as they healed.

Whether public health policy includes spirituality as a social determinant or not, Catholic health care shouts a loud “yes” to the question of inclusion of spirituality as a social need. The Catholic sector is well-positioned to respond to the spiritual needs of patients and residents. Catholic health care seeks the resources and personnel

to provide whole-person care. Each employee sees it as his/her very mission for such care. In the following pages of this report, enjoy the people and means that integrate spirituality in the daily work of our sponsored ministries.





Message from the President

Friends,

If I've done the math correctly, this is my 24th *Ministry Report* letter. And, as many of you are already aware, it's also my last. After more than 16 years with this wonderful system, I have decided to step away. My last day here will be December 19. I have written, deleted, and rewritten many parts of this letter several times over the past few weeks. Finding the right words to suit this occasion has not been easy.



Scott McConnaha

My decision to leave FSCC Sponsored Ministries has been made after many months of prayerful discernment. I have come to recognize that it's now time to pass the baton to someone with the energy and fresh ideas to lead this ministry into its next exciting chapter. While I will miss working with the Sisters, the system office staff, and the many inspiring people in our ministry organizations, I walk away with the comfort of knowing that the good, vital work will continue.

I came to FSCCM in 2008 to manage the system's communications, advocacy efforts, and education programming. I then served as vice president of mission for four years before becoming the CEO in 2018. Throughout all of these years and various jobs I have felt truly blessed to have the opportunity to help promote and extend the Sisters' mission and ministry in the world. These past six years as CEO have been very rewarding and humbling. As an organization, we've really come together and accomplished quite a lot over these past several years. And through all of it, even during the most challenging of times, I have felt the Holy Spirit guiding our work.

It's a happy coincidence that the theme of this issue of *Ministry Report* is spirituality. While the articles herein focus mostly on the role spirituality plays in the care we provide to our residents and patients, I will be forever grateful to have worked for an organization that fosters a sense of spirituality for its employees. It's becoming increasingly rare in our world for people to find a job that not only fulfills their professional aspirations, but also feeds their soul. The way we enliven our work with a sense of spirituality provides a level of meaning and purpose to our jobs that is needed now more than ever in our world. I will always love this about our ministry and I hope you do, too.

Thank you all for your prayerful support over the years. I came to depend on it more than words can express. Know that my prayers for you and these ministries will remain constant!

Scott McConnaha Receives Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative Award

Scott McConnaha, president and CEO of Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity Sponsored Ministries, received the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative award from Jeremy Levin, MHA, director of advocacy. Froedtert Holy Family Memorial, Manitowoc, Wisc., is a member of Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative. McConnaha was nominated for the award by Ryan Neville, president, Northeast Market. The Cooperative's emphasis is development of a collaborative network among both freestanding and system affiliated rural hospitals. McConnaha was recognized for his leadership in the partnership of Holy Family Memorial and Froedtert and Medical College of Wisconsin. Congratulations, Scott.

The Sister Martin Flavin Award Presented to Sister Delores Wisnicky

At the 2024 Leadership Enrichment Program, Sister Delores Wisnicky was awarded the prestigious Sister Martin Flavin Franciscan Ministry Award. Recognized for her modeling the mission of the system and St. Paul Elder Services, Sister Delores integrates our Franciscan mission, vision, and values into her daily work as director of mission and spiritual care and in her own personal life. The stand-up applause from her senior leader colleagues was well deserved.



Left to right, Sister Natalie Binversie, Sister Delores Wisnicky, and Scott McConnaha.

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A Sense of Spiritual Community

Fr. Ervin Matt has been a priest in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for close to 70 years. As Fr. Matt started to need more assistance, Clement Manor was the perfect fit for him. Having twelve other fellow retired priests living on campus and many religious sisters within the facility has quickly made Clement Manor feel at home. “I am grateful to be able to celebrate with the Eucharist every day!” said Fr. Matt. Staff does lend some assistance to and from the chapel, and Fr. Matt chose an apartment in the East Building of Clement Manor closest to the chapel.

Our community, characterized by its welcoming and compassionate nature, is home to many retired religious individuals who display a graceful spirituality daily. This spirit is evident throughout the campus, making it a warm and inviting place. Fr. Matt, with his quick adaptation and willingness to bless those he meets in the halls, has become a beloved figure in our community. The strong sense of mutual encouragement among residents, which is a testament to our supportive and united community, helps to alleviate the stress of change, fostering a sense of belonging and comfort.

While Clement Manor has a stellar reputation, the decision to move from one’s long-time home is always a challenging one. Recognizing this, our dedicated pastoral care



Mass being celebrated by residents at Clement Manor.

staff makes every effort to ease the transition. They visit new residents within days of arrival, encouraging them to participate in our diverse spiritual offerings, including bible studies, the Hymn Sing Choir, Communion Services, and daily chapel services, including Catholic Mass from Wednesday to Sunday and offering the Anointing of the Sick to those who wish to receive it.

The Hymn Sing Choir is a newer group formed by residents of the Clement Manor West Building (aka independent building) wanting to give back to the community through music. The members presented their first concert in August to our Health Center and Memory Care Assisted

Living residents. The members of the group were amazed to have such support! They had a crowded dining room with many friends the group members had known for years as neighbors, who now need more assistance and live in different areas of Clement Manor. The audience’s actions, who were singing along, smiling, and engaging in ways they would not have if the music had not been present, moved the residents in the group. The choir is already planning for a Christmas Concert inspired by the response of the first concert. The spirit is at work throughout the entire campus of Clement Manor.



Spirituality

Spirituality is a substantial aspect of the healing process at Franciscan Healthcare. The facility begins every workday with a prayer that is offered throughout the hospital and adjacent buildings. Everyone within the hospital is encouraged to stop what they are doing and silently participate. Employees volunteer to say the prayer through an overhead announcement. Some departments such as mission, pastoral care, communications, patient intake, operating room, billing, and information technology have employees who sign up often to lead the prayer.

The facility's trained chaplain provides spirituality for patients by using one or more assessment tools to find the needs of each patient. He provides for the staff through a ministry of presence. He makes himself available by being visible

throughout the hospital and by email or phone. Further, he offers to call local clergy if the patient wants their own priest/pastor/minister for spiritual support. He is assisted by two Roman Catholic priests who are Sacramental Ministers. These priests are available to say Mass at the hospital five times a week, hear confessions of patients and staff when requested, and provide the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick in case of emergencies or if requested by a patient or their family.

One of our Sacramental Ministers holds a monthly talk about spirituality in the workplace. It is held over lunch hour and employees bring their lunch and participate in person. For those who cannot attend, the presentation is recorded and provided for all employees via our Intranet so that they may watch the presentation at their leisure. Further, this same Sacramental Minister

holds Saturday morning "Listening Moments" open to employees and the public at large to come and speak with him about any issues they may be facing.

Franciscan Healthcare's mission is "To live and to promote the



Father Michel N'Do, Sacramental Minister at Franciscan Healthcare, offers "Listening Moments" weekly to anyone who wishes to meet with him.

healing mission of Jesus Christ." This is lived by all employees and can be seen as they interact and care for their patients. The chaplain is often called to a patient's room to pray with a patient who is anxious, or to the pre-op room to pray with a patient going in for surgery. He has been called to the emergency room to find a priest to offer last rites to a patient being transferred to a higher level of care. It is not just the chaplain who does this, nurses, CNAs, providers, and administrators have been seen praying or offering support to patients and their families, as well as staff and their families. All who live the mission find healing the body, mind, and spirit to be the healing mission of Jesus Christ.



Sister Joy Rose and Chaplain Thomas Manhart, along with Father Michel, are always available to assist with spiritual needs.



Spirituality as a Social Determinant of Health at Froedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital

More and more evidence supports the importance of spirituality as a social determinant of health (SDOH), which reinforces what we spiritual care providers in a hospital setting have known for years. Whole person care of body, mind, and spirit is integral to the healing process. Some people have a limited understanding of spiritual care as just praying with patients, but it is so much more. Healthcare chaplains go through intensive training and become board certified in order to understand the significance of spirituality in the life of a person. Spirituality is not to be confused with religiosity. Spirituality includes a sense of ultimate meaning, purpose, transcendence, and connectedness which every human being has, whether religious or not. Spiritual care addresses barriers to an individual's achieving improved physical, psychological, and spiritual wellness by attending to their physical, existential, emotional, and other sources of pain that reduce their resiliency and ability to find peace and meaning amid suffering.

Chaplains work as part of an interdisciplinary team to help identify spiritual needs of the patients during their hospitalization. At Froedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital, we have three full-time board certified staff chaplains and four part time on-call chaplains. Our staff chaplains round daily to all inpatients to assess and address their spiritual needs, attend Care

Coordination rounds with the rest of the interdisciplinary team, provide encouragement and support to staff, assist patients who need a power of attorney for health care, and support families of those who are seriously ill or dying. One of our chaplains supports patients in the Cancer Care Center and facilitates support groups for cancer patients and caregivers. Our on-call chaplains cover emergencies in the evenings and on weekends.

Sacramental ministry is an important part of our Catholic identity here at Froedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital since our mission is rooted in the healing presence of Jesus Christ. We provide opportunities

for our Catholic patients to receive Eucharist and/or Sacrament of the Sick during their hospitalization. Each week, Tuesday through Friday, we have several area priests who take turns celebrating Mass, which is televised to our patients. We collaborate with area Protestant clergy for patients who request their own pastor to attend to their spiritual needs. Many of our patients have no religious affiliation but still have spiritual needs which we attend to. Chaplains also provide spiritual care for our staff. We check in regularly with front line staff and provide opportunities for spiritual growth for all staff during the Advent and Lenten seasons. Spirituality is an essential element of well-being.



FHFM staff chaplains at morning huddle: Daniel Borchers, Kyle Sorensen and Roxanne Miner.



Providing Holistic Spiritual Care at Genesis

The Genesis HealthCare System Spiritual Care Department offers spiritual and emotional support for patients and their families. The Spiritual Care staff is available around the clock, regardless of a person's faith tradition or religious affiliation.

Rev. Randy Gearhart, Genesis Spiritual Care Director, believes that treating the body, mind and spirit is essential for a healthy patient.

"We can't fully treat someone without addressing any spiritual and emotional needs," said Gearhart. "We want to provide peace to patients and their families in their greatest times of need."

Ministries and services

The Spiritual Care team is comprised of seven chaplains and one administrative assistant. Two chaplains are dedicated to Genesis Hospice Care's inpatient and outpatient programs. A chaplain also

regularly visits Genesis Cancer Care patients.

The chaplains provide various services to patients and their families, including:

- Daily patient visits.
- 24/7 response services.
- Clergy notifications when patients wish to connect with a home church or synagogue.
- Support with end-of-life conversations and family discussions, including advance directives for living wills and healthcare power of attorneys.
- Grief and bereavement support.
- Training opportunities for lay visitors.
- Annual memorial services for those who have passed away in the hospital.

Additionally, Genesis Spiritual Care thrives from the help of its

volunteers, who assist with the following ministries:

- Visit with patients to determine their religious preference.
- Serves as Eucharistic Ministers for religious sacraments.
- Provides Bibles and spiritual literature.
- Assists with the No One Dies Alone program to ensure that patients have someone with them during the last moments of life.

St. Francis Chapel

Genesis Hospital features St. Francis Chapel, named in honor of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis followed in Jesus Christ's footsteps, living the gospel and rekindling the love of God, which is the same spirit of the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. St. Francis Chapel is open 24/7 to those of all faiths for prayer and reflection.

Community compassion

Gearhart says that the Genesis Spiritual Care Department is available for everyone in any stage of life, whether they're experiencing joy or sorrow or calm or crisis. He often hears from patients after their hospital stays.

"We get cards from patients thanking our chaplains," said Gearhart. "Compassion is a central core of our Genesis mission. We're happy to be a part of a patient's healing."



Genesis Hospital features St. Francis Chapel, named in honor of St. Francis of Assisi.



Spiritual Belief and Practices are Sources of Comfort and Strength

At the very end of our continuum of care is the care we provide as our residents and patients approach end of life. Spirituality can play a pivotal role in the healing process at that time, providing individuals with a sense of peace, purpose, and connection. As people confront their mortality, spiritual beliefs and practices often become sources of comfort and strength, facilitating a deeper understanding of life's journey and what lies beyond.

As those we serve experience physical decline, we see many of them experience a range of emotions as well, including fear, anxiety, and grief. Spirituality offers a framework for addressing these feelings, allowing individuals to explore profound questions about existence, meaning, and the afterlife. This exploration can help mitigate the fear of death by fostering a sense of acceptance. For many, spiritual beliefs can provide reassurance that death is not an end but a transition to another state of being. This perspective can alleviate anxiety, allowing individuals to approach their final days with a sense of calm and clarity.

Spirituality often emphasizes the importance of relationships as well, both with others and with a higher power. For those nearing the end of life, reconnecting with loved ones can be a deeply healing experience. Spiritual practices, such as prayer or meditation can facilitate these connections, allowing individuals to express their feelings, share their

stories, and seek forgiveness or closure. This communal aspect of spirituality reinforces the notion that no one is alone in their journey, fostering a sense of belonging and support during an otherwise isolating time.

Spiritual care is increasingly recognized in palliative and hospice settings, where professionals incorporate spiritual assessments into their holistic approach to care. This recognition underscores the importance of addressing the spiritual needs of patients alongside their physical and emotional needs. Spiritual caregivers—such as the Chaplains employ—can help individuals navigate their beliefs and find meaning in their experiences, guiding them toward an acceptance of fate.

Not only can spirituality encourage individuals to reflect on their lives, celebrating achievements and coming to terms with regrets, but that reflective process can allow for personal growth even in the face of impending death. Many individuals report a heightened sense of gratitude and appreciation for life as they engage in this introspection, which can lead to a more fulfilling end-of-life experience.

We also witness that engaging in spiritual practices can promote a sense of hope and resilience. Many find comfort in rituals or sacred texts that resonate with their beliefs, which can provide strength in facing the unknown. Spirituality can encourage individuals to embrace their life



Chapels at McCormick Home and St. Paul Elder Services.

stories, transforming their experiences into a narrative of meaning and purpose. This narrative can serve as a powerful tool for healing, helping individuals make peace with their past and find closure.

As our residents and patients navigate the complexities of mortality, spirituality can be a guiding light, offering peace in a time marked by uncertainty. By addressing the spiritual dimensions of dying, we as caregivers can help ensure that individuals experience a dignified and meaningful transition, affirming the value of every moment of life.



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Music Lifts Spirits

By Sister Joellen Kohlmann, OSF, Mission Leader

Have you ever thought about how music can stir up emotions within you? How has a simple melody lifted your spirits or brought a smile to your face? Do you ever have a simple song or melody just stick with you for a few hours, a day, or maybe even longer?

The Franciscan Center’s mission is in part to foster the beauty and power of music—through instruction, appreciation of skills, encouragement, and performance.

On August 8, 2024, Conservatory students along with Conservatory teachers, provided music for Froedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital’s celebration of 125 years of their history. Performances included piano, violin, and flute.

The Franciscan Center offers an environment and opportunity to enjoy music as part of both emotional and spiritual health. “Music has the power to transcend language and cultural barriers ... In spiritual practices, music serves as a universal language that can evoke profound emotional responses,

facilitate meditative states, and foster a sense of unity with the universe.”

The Franciscan Center brings many different opportunities to the area for people to relax, enjoy, or be refreshed through the concert series and other events.



Conservatory students and teachers at Froedtert Holy Family Memorial Hospital’s celebration.