Elders and Faith Community Partnerships

Catholic Health Association Webinar
May 5, 2017

Howard Gleckman
Julie Trocchio

Howard Gleckman
Senior Fellow
The Urban Institute

Julie Trocchio
Senior Director, Community Benefit and Continuing Care
Today, 13 million Americans will need personal assistance or other supports. By mid-century, this number is expected to double. More than 80 percent live at home and the vast majority of their care is provided by family members and friends.

While the health care system is essential to many frail older people, most can remain at home with adequate support and assistance.

Part of that support and assistance can come from health care organizations themselves and from faith-based communities – parishes, churches, synagogues, mosques and other congregations.

New Booklet

“We must reawaken our collective sense of gratitude, appreciation and hospitality, helping the elderly know they are a living part of their communities”

Pope Francis
At His Papal Audience on March 4, 2015

The second quotation is from Rabbi Shalom Stern. I think it sums up wonderfully the topic of our webinar today.

“To heal is to do God’s holy work. To soothe pain, to prevent grief, to wipe away a tear becomes the supreme privilege of anyone who must come in contact with the helpless, poor, and sick in body and spirit. The alleviation of physical pain is often beyond our control but alleviation of psychological anguish is something that all of us is capable of providing.”

Rabbi Shalom Stern
When Words Fail
Jason Aronson Inc. - 1999

Advantages for Health Care Organizations

- Augment discharge and navigation programs
- Reduce admissions, re-admissions
- Improve outcomes
- Help fulfill mission and tax-exempt purpose
Advantages for Faith Communities

- Strengthen sense of community among congregation
- Reconnect with congregants no longer involved in congregation
- Support the work of staff and clergy
- Free up time of staff and clergy for other responsibilities
- Help link congregants and members to community resources

Advantages for Congregants

- Support for family caregivers
- Sense of belonging and connectedness to faith community
- Better connection to health care system
- Assistance for living at home
- Coordination of care and services
- Spiritual support
Examples of Partnership Models

- Support and training models
- Faith community nursing
- Navigation models

What Health Care Organization Can Do

- Host meetings of local clergy, describe services, find out about needs in their congregations
- Reach out to clergy
- Hold wellness programs or screenings in congregation spaces
- Offer hospitality, parking and educational resources to clergy and volunteers
What Health Care Organization Can Do – con’t

- Help train clergy and lay volunteers in visiting patients
- Convene area faith community nurses and volunteers for education and networking
- Help support faith community nurse programs financially or with other resources such as grant writing
- Offer rotation for seminarians in hospitals and long term care facilities

Joint Faith Community and Health Care Organization Activities

- Teach parish volunteers how to identify health problems of fellow congregants and refer them to community services
- Train volunteers to help members of their faith community to navigate the health system
- Convene health care chaplains and clergy to discuss how they might work together
Joint Faith Community and Health Care Organization Activities – con’t

- Arrange for parish clergy, faith community nurses or volunteers to visit residents
- Develop training program or other support for family caregivers

Tips for Getting Started

- Identify needs
- Start a conversation
- Find champions and partners
- Recognize your limitations
- Acknowledge the skills partners bring
- Start small
- Seek funding opportunities