

LUTHERAN HEALTH MINISTRIES of the FOOTHILLS

Marcia Brinkley, RN, Parish Nurse

A parish nurse works for a church or group of churches. A Lutheran minister, Rev. Granger Westberg, started the first Parish Nurse pilot project in the early 1980's. "Hospitals and doctors' offices are sickness institutions," he thought, "Whereas houses of prayer are places for people to get well, both mentally and physically. The roles that Reverend Westberg envisioned for Parish Nurses are still relevant 20+ years later:

1. As **Health Educators/Health Promoters**, the Parish Nurse – together with the Board of LHMF - makes health information available to congregations and to the public. In the past 9 months, for example, I've taught classes on Medicare D enrollment; found speakers for a health-related seminar; written newsletter articles; located educational materials on health topics; and set up a flu vaccine clinic. Right now, I'm preparing information sheets about various topics (Elder Abuse, How to Find the Right Caregiver, Living Wills, Disaster Preparedness, etc.) to post on our newly redesigned website, www.lhmf.org. (Thanks to our new webmaster, Les Simons!)
2. As a **Personal Health Counselor**, the Parish Nurse addresses individual and family health concerns, emphasizing early response to small problems and encouraging healthy lifestyle changes. To that end, I perform blood pressure checks after church services or at health-related events, and am available to discuss health concerns by telephone or as part of a home visit.
3. As a **Liaison with Community Health Organizations**, the Parish Nurse provides a link between the patient and the complex health care system. A frequent request is for help in locating services for people who want to stay in their own homes, so I help to sort through the agencies that provide help with transportation, housekeeping, meal preparation, and personal care until we find the right mix at (hopefully) the right price. Other frequent requests are for help in navigating the health insurance maze, and determining eligibility for financial assistance programs. I'm also a member of the Synod's Older Adult Ministry Task Force.
4. As a **Clarifier of the Close Relationship between Health and Faith**, the Parish Nurse participates in Healing Services and together with our visitation pastor, Rev. John Rieck, provides support to members who are homebound. The Telephone Ministry, made up of volunteer residents of Solheim Lutheran Home, provides another method of maintaining contact with homebound seniors.

Please feel free to contact me if you have a question, idea or suggestion. I normally work on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I'll be expanding my hours in June, at which point I'll be establishing regular office hours (at First Lutheran Church) one afternoon a week (dates and times to be announced). I look forward to hearing from all of you.

Office cell: 818/209-9535 **Email:** marbrink@aol.com

Office: First Lutheran Church, 1300 E. Colorado St., Glendale 91205