



WELS Nursing Today

Parish Nursing—Doing what is Good & Right before the Lord!

Written by Sue Bolha RN, *Parish Nurse Council Coordinator in collaboration with Linda Golembiewski, RN, BSN and former adjunct at CUW, teaching Legal Aspects of Parish Nursing.*

One of our WELS pastors recently asked about the legal ramifications of a parish nurse practice. What might a parish nurse be officially authorized to do? Any nurse, regardless of the setting in which he/she practices is guided by the policies and statutes set forth by the state in which the nurse is licensed. Since the statutes may vary from state to state it is neither necessary nor wise to make an all-inclusive policy for WELS parish nurses. It is, however, wise and necessary to review some guidelines as they apply to the unique nursing opportunities associated with parish nursing.

Liability: The Nurse Practice Act and State Statutes of the state in which the parish nurse is licensed to practice must be followed. A violation of these standards of practice constitutes unprofessional behavior and may result in the suspension, revocation and non-renewal of the nursing license. A congregation must be respectful of the standards by which a parish nurse must operate. It is a good idea to check with the church liability insurance and clarify any issues that arise. It is also a good idea, but not required, for a nurse to carry her own liability insurance.

HIPAA regulations may affect the practice of a parish nurse practice. Good communication with the members of a congregation and good documentation by the nurse will help maintain a proper program.

Types of Service: The underlying philosophy of the parish nurse program supports a non-invasive health & wellness practice, functioning under the roles of health educator, health counselor, community liaison and

volunteer coordinator. Examples of a non-invasive practice might include a visitation ministry, health fairs, and health education programs, leading an exercise class, blood pressure screenings or bereavement follow-up.

Delegated Duties: The parish nurse (RN) is accountable for duties of delegation carried out in the parish nursing program guided by a job description.

Staffing: The parish nurse program is directed by a registered nurse currently licensed in the state in which he/she serves. The parish nurse serves as a reflection of the congregation, and consequently, must serve in a manner that is consistent with the congregation's overall ministry.

The most effective parish nurse programs include a group of nurses working together. Although not required, the additional nurses provide broader service and expertise to the program. Non-RN's can serve within the program, but only under the direction and authority of the parish nurse (RN) and within legal guidelines.

This information on the legal issues surrounding parish nursing and more can be found in the **Suggested Guidelines for WELS Parish Nursing** posted on www.welsnurses.net on the Parish Nurse page. More questions? Contact us at welsnurses@wels.net.

Why would a congregation benefit from a parish nurse program? A healthier congregation is better able to serve the Lord and his people! And as the parish nurse intentionally cares for both body and soul he/she will find ways to connect them to God's Word, giving strength to his people.

An experience of a lifetime

By Amberly Weiglein and Melissa Zambito,
Wisconsin Lutheran College graduates

Ready, Set, Let's Go!

In May of 2014, Wisconsin Lutheran College class of 2015 nursing students set off to Zambia, Africa, for a clinical adventure of a lifetime.

Throughout the journey in Zambia, every student was given the opportunity to observe healthcare practices at different clinical sites all throughout the country. Each clinical site offered a new and interesting learning experience that allowed each student to understand the culture in Zambia in a new way. Some of the most memorable clinical sites included Home Based Care, Beit Cure Hospital, and the Mwembezhi Medical Mission.

Home Based Care

Home Based Care would not be possible without the community health volunteers, who do not have formal medical training, yet they do their best to help out in the community. Part of home based care included home visits and blood pressure screenings. One blood pressure screening was at St. Peter's Church in Chamba Valley, Lusaka, which is part of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA). The stations were set up right outside using church benches. Overall, 61 blood pressures were taken in this community in less than two hours. Not only was the blood pressure screening reaching out to church members, but those in the community as well.

Overall, 61 blood pressures were taken in this community in less than two hours.

Beit Cure Hospital

Beit Cure Hospital, located in Lusaka, Zambia, supports the treatment of children with debilitating illnesses, diseases, and disabilities free of charge. They were established in 2006 and have been transforming the lives of children in Africa every day. Beit Cure Hospital focuses on not only providing medical services to their patients, but also providing spiritual healing. Their culture revolves around the Bible verse from Matthew 19:14, "Jesus said, Let the

little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Their foundation and core is surrounded around faith.

Mwembezhi Lutheran Mission Rural Health Clinic

Mwembezhi Lutheran Mission Rural Health Clinic, located in Zambia, is a WELS associated healthcare clinic that serves the people within the local area. It was named Mwembezhi, meaning shepherd, to better represent the Christian aspect of their mission. The clinic opened in 1961 and has enabled thousands of people to receive life-saving treatments, along with spiritual care. Nursing students spent two days at the clinic observing care and conducting patient education on topics such as HIV, dental hygiene, water safety, fire safety, and safe pregnancy.

Truly an Experience of a Lifetime

It was an amazing opportunity as nursing students to be able to travel to Zambia and learn about another cultures' healthcare at various clinical places while serving fellow believers in Christ. This experience was a truly memorable experience.



Where Did the Years Go?

by Kari Belter RN

Where did the years go? Seems like such a short time since I was planning to leave for Malawi to work with the Lutheran Mobile Clinic (LMC). What started as a three year commitment turned into four and a half but in the end seemed like only two? Now I'm back in the United States and slowly adjusting to life here again. I haven't decided yet which is harder, moving to Malawi or coming "home." I spent a lot of time preparing to volunteer in Malawi but really did not know what to expect; I don't think anything would have truly prepared me. I just needed to get there, learn what to do, and ask questions...lots of questions. I was so thankful for the patience of our Malawian staff! Returning to the U.S. has been difficult too; I feel a bit guilty for thinking and calling Malawi home when talking with family and friends, but that's what it became for me.



live on and our “round the clock” security staff are another responsibility. Clearly this is not a “typical” nursing job, but it is an amazing experience for those who get to volunteer with CAMM.

I have been blessed tremendously by my experience in Malawi. There are very few opportunities as a nurse to truly share one’s faith in their work place. This was a perfect example of one of those opportunities. Each day before patient care begins, we have devotion. We are able to encourage our patients in their faith and pray with them. I thank God for letting me serve the people in Malawi and pray that he will continue to use me for his purposes now that I’m in the U.S. to stay... at least for now.

I have been blessed tremendously by my experience in Malawi. There are very few opportunities as a nurse to truly share one’s faith in their work place. This was a perfect example of one of those opportunities.



LMC has a staff of 27 people ranging from nurses and clinicians to part-time village workers and property staff. They do most of the “hands on” work. Expats are in a “behind the scenes” role but we do whatever we can to help. Some days I’d assess patients in our “Under 5’s” clinic where we do well-child checks and make sure children are up-to-date on their vaccinations. Other days I’d be in the pharmacy filling pill bags. Occasionally I’d rush a patient to the district hospital in Lilongwe for more intense care than could be provided by a mobile clinic. On days that I spent in town, I ordered and collected medications and supplies, and attempted to find trainings for our nurses. While working as the clinic administrator I took care of the financial aspects of the clinic – budgeting, payroll, payroll taxes, pension, property taxes, etc. Our clinic operated with two Toyota Land Cruiser ambulances; we were also responsible for making sure they were properly maintained. The property we

Registration is open

Registration for the 2015 fall continuing education online Parish Nurse Course offered through Wisconsin Lutheran College is now available. Go to www.wlc.edu/nursing to register. Registration questions may be directed to Dr. Rebekah Carey, Nursing Chair at Rebekah.Carey@wlc.edu.

■ **“Nurses of the WELS: A Gathering of Professionals”** October 24th WELS nurses and students will gather at Wisconsin Lutheran College for an opportunity to learn and grow in faith. Our theme: “Always be Prepared.” Our verse to guide the day: I Peter 3:15: “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” Registration available September 1st. Kathy Wendland will be our keynote speaker.

■ **WELSNA goes to Oregon!** Beginning in February, one of the RN’s on our database and I began emailing each other. Ramona Saatkamp is from White Salmon, Wash. and she had plans to attend the April LWMS Cascade Circuit WOW Retreat in Hood River, Oregon. She was wondering if she might be able to take some information about WELSNA to the women who attended. We sent her one of our tabletop WELSNA displays along with some of our newly redesigned brochures, invitations to join WELSNA, and some samples of the materials we have developed.

There were 57 attendees representing 10 area congregations and out of them, six nurses were identified. The ladies had a great time together and Ramona was able to say a few words to the group about WELSNA, encouraging the ladies to take materials back to their congregation and pass them along to other nurses. Ramona reports that most of what we sent was picked up by attendees and that she was glad to be able to help us out. Thanks Ramona!

WELSNA is open to sending a guest speaker or one of our tabletop displays and materials to other

gatherings around the country where nurses may be a part of the group. Just let us know and we can work out the details. We want to tell others about the WELS Nurses Association. Why? The WELS Nurses Association aims to educate and support nurses, encouraging them to serve others with Christ-centered care.

■ **Men’s club supports WELSNA nursing scholarship!** The men of St. John’s in the town of Princeton, Wis. recently decided they wanted to help support the WELSNA Nursing Scholarship at Wisconsin Lutheran College! They have been a faithful and generous contributor of CAMM over the years and because the Lord had richly blessed them they went looking for another way to further the gospel. How are they able to do it?

Every now and then, two retired gentlemen sort through large containers of recyclables and bundle the newspapers they find into a semi-truck. When the truck is full of newspapers the men’s club is reimbursed for their effort.

Dr. Rebekah Carey, chair, school of nursing, says, “The WLC nursing program and the students focus on Christ-centered care. They instruct, mentor, and encourage the students to approach their coursework, their clinicals, and their future profession from a Christian perspective.”

A special thanks to the men’s club of St. John’s for partnering with us to help prepare the next generation of compassionate and capable nurses through the WELSNA Scholarship. Go to www.welsnurses.net for more information.



Special Ministries WELS Nurses Association
N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive Waukesha, WI 53188-1108