

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS

Examples of Integrating NACC Members into a Diocese February 2013

- The Archdiocese of Seattle designated Erica Cohen Moore, the Associate Director for Pastoral Care and Coordinator of Clergy Events, as the person responsible for overseeing the healthcare ministry and ensuring the integration of our members into the local Church. For the past two years the Archdiocese has sponsored a Saturday morning education/reflection program for our members that included Erica addressing our members about the local Church, and ensuring that all of our members, no matter where they were serving, completed the Safe Environment Training. The Archdiocese has also developed service protocols for members, and the Archdiocesan Directory lists them under the health care institutions or other ministries where they serve as lay ecclesial health care ministers.
- In 2008, the Archdiocese of Boston appointed Deacon Jim Greer as Director of the Office of Health Care Ministry. Deacon Greer serves as the liaison to our chaplains and supports the ministry of chaplains and Coordinators of Catholic Pastoral Services, assigned to provide pastoral care to patients and their families/loved ones in health care facilities within the Archdiocese of Boston. The office also collaborates with parishes in their outreach to the sick, homebound, aged, dying, and nursing home residents by training and ongoing support of the Pastoral Visitors and Bereavement Coordinators. Several of our members are employed by the archdiocese and work in diverse secular healthcare settings. Deacon Greer gathers the chaplains twice a year for education and spiritual renewal, as well as provides a newsletter. Our board certified members also teach the pastoral visitors (parish volunteers) and bereavement training courses. Deacon Jim became a member of NACC and attends our NACC local gatherings when they are in the Boston area.
- The Archdiocese of Detroit designated Joyce Hyttinen, Associate Director of the Christian Service and Health Care Ministries, to serve as liaison to our members. She attends some NACC functions and supports them by advertising/promoting this ministry by sharing information on events they offer throughout the year. As she works with the Detroit priests and three Detroit hospitals to arrange on-call schedules for priests in case of the need for the anointing of the sick, she communicates with our chaplains working in those hospitals. She also uses our NACC chaplains in the Eucharistic Ministry trainings for vicariates, with chaplains specifying the expectations for someone volunteering in a hospital setting.

Examples of ways other bishops and/or their dioceses and our members interact:

1. Bishop annually invites NACC members to a meeting with him or a delegate to discuss the pastoral care ministry they are providing, sometimes over a lunch or with Eucharist.
2. Bishop meets with an NACC member who has applied for certification before the bishop writes a letter of endorsement so that the bishop can come to know the NACC member, and the call to this spiritual care ministry.
3. One bishop annually sends a birthday card with a thank you note.
4. NACC board certified members are used in developing and providing training programs for parish pastoral care volunteers.
5. NACC members are invited to district meetings to share the work of spiritual care in healthcare and other settings and how to connect the ministry to parish ministry.
6. NACC members are invited to and participate in diocesan assemblies.
7. NACC members are invited to, publicly acknowledged at, and given blessings along with other health care workers at a World Day of the Sick Mass, the White Mass, or other diocesan function for pastoral care workers.
8. Diocesan newspaper features articles about the spiritual/pastoral care ministry in which NACC members are involved.
9. In diocesan pastoral planning, diocesan leaders are examining how to integrate chaplains into reorganization of ministries to develop seamless pastoral care of Catholics.
10. Bishop personally comes or sends a representative to an NACC local educational event taking place in his diocese.

How does NACC encourage its members to initiate communication with their Ordinary?

The NACC encourages its members to take the initiative to make themselves known to the Ordinary and other bishops of the diocese. David Lichter, NACC Executive Director, wrote in his column of the September 2010 NACC *Vision* issue:

How can you strengthen your own connection to the Church and its leaders? May I recommend to you that you take the time this coming year to write to and/or make an appointment with your bishop or his delegate to introduce yourself and share your ministry with your bishop so that he can get to know you? What about several of you who live in a diocese making a group appointment, even for 15 minutes, to meet with your bishop, introduce yourselves and where you minister, and let him know the blessings of your ministry? What about sending a card and letter to him during Pastoral Care Week or mailing to him an NACC Prayer Card for World Day of the Sick with a message about your ministry?

The NACC seeks to learn from the Ordinaries and Auxiliary Bishops how better we can serve them to ensure that our NACC members are part of the local Church to continue the healing ministry of Jesus in the name of the Church.