

## Guiding Questions When Creating or Developing a Health Ministry

Since health ministry might be a fairly new concept to your faith community, questions and concerns are raised when this idea is presented to congregations across the country. Thousands of congregations are already involved in health ministry and answers to these concerns are available. Existing care and concern, visitation, social justice, and youth ministries *are* health ministries because they care for the human person.

Some concerns and issues are listed here to prepare you for the likely possibility that someone in your congregation will raise them. Before presenting health ministry to your congregation, read through these and prepare. As we have assisted in the development of health ministries over the years, we've been challenged with opportunities to think about these questions and develop suggestions and information that may be helpful in your situation.

1. Define the goals of the Health Ministry and the statement of purpose. What is the main focus (prevention, training of volunteers, support, visitation, wellness, being present, visitation, health counseling)?
2. Define the limitations. What will the health committee do? What will the health minister do? What won't they do?
3. What are the lines of accountability?
4. How will the ministry be implemented?
5. What is our theology about health ministry? What are the theological concepts or mission that motivate us to want to be involved in a Health Ministry?
6. What model will we use?
7. What are the needs of the congregation that a health ministry could meet?
8. How, when, and by whom will the program be evaluated?
9. What strategies are needed to achieve the implementation of the health ministry?
10. How will personnel be selected? Will we hire someone from within the congregation or someone who is not a member? What qualifications and training will be required? Who and how will supervision and accountability be handled?
11. What is involved in developing a liaison relationship with community resources such as the health department, home health agencies, the medical community, service clubs, hospitals, health related agencies, etc.?

12. What concerns must we address regarding liability exposure?
13. What shall the role of the health minister be?
14. What shall be the role of lay volunteers working in health ministry and what kind of training will be provided for them?
15. How will the program be funded?
16. How much funding will be necessary?
17. How shall we develop clearly stated measurable (in terms of evaluation) standards and practices and what shall they be?
18. What are the possibilities for ongoing, regular education for a health minister? What are ways we can support the personal and spiritual development of health ministers?
19. How will we address confidentiality concerns?
20. What will guide the health minister and lay volunteers in responding to an emergency situation?
21. What/who will serve as a professional support network for the health minister?
22. How shall we address and monitor professional ethics, legal requirements (e.g. reporting suspected cases of child abuse)?