

WV Faith Community Nursing Network

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The Future of Nursing West Virginia (FONWV) is a 501c3 non-profit coalition dedicated to improving the culture of health in WV through strengthening an expanding nursing practice, education and leadership. FONWV has developed an online [Toolkit and Network](#) to support faith community nurses (FCNs) in WV. The goal is to have FCNs serving every county in the state.

FCNs serve in several roles, including:

- Health advisor
- Educator on health issues
- Visitor of church members at home or in the hospital
- Provider of referrals to community resources and provide assistance in obtaining needed health services
- Developer of support groups within the church
- Trainer and coordinator of volunteers
- Provider of health screenings

FCNs are not expected to provide patient care in the church or at a patient's home but rather to be a source of referrals for services in the community. They coordinate existing services and supplement them with a holistic dimension of health and caring. A FCN program can operate in several different ways. Models include: 1) one church supporting its own full or part-time nurse, 2) several churches supporting one nurse, 3) a group of volunteer nurses supporting one or several churches 4) a nurse related to a hospital or clinic who supports a church or churches as part of his or her job. Of the several thousand FCNs, only about 35% in the US are compensated financially for their ministry.

FCN is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the historic practice of professional nursing, and is consistent with the basic assumptions of many faiths that we care for self and others as an expression of God's love. However, it is not only available to Christian congregations. There are Jewish Congregational Nurses, Muslim Crescent Nurses, and RNs serving in similar capacities within other faith traditions.

FCN is a specialty nursing practice guided by Scope and Standards of Practice, approved by the American Nurses Association, which define it as "...the specialized practice of professional nursing that focuses on the intentional care of the spirit as part of the process of promoting holistic health and preventing or minimizing illness in a faith community" (*American Nurses Association, 2012, Faith Community Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice, Silver Springs, MD: Author, p1*).

To become a certified FCN, the registered nurse must have a minimum 2 years of nursing experience, a current license in the state where the faith community is located, and have completed a FCN foundations course for the specialty practice as recognized by the American Nurses Association, and practiced a minimum of 1000 hours in the previous 2 years in the faith community. WVU School of Nursing has just launched a new faith community nursing certificate course in the fall 2016. The course is offered both online and a hybrid option, which includes both online courses and a face-to-face educational session with School of Nursing faculty in Morgantown. For more information

about the WVU SON faith community nursing program, including the application process, visit <http://nursing.hsc.wvu.edu/academics/continuing-education/>.

If you are interested in joining or supporting the WV FCN Network go to: <http://www.futureofnursingwv.org/faith-community-rn-toolkit> and click the icon.

Aila Accad, MSN, RN is the Executive Director of the Future of Nursing Action Coalition. For more information go to www.futureofnursingwv.org or contact Aila at futureofnursingwv@gmail.com