

## **CHAPLAINCY SERVICES: ROLE IN TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL**

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## **ABSTRACT:**

Rapid modernization and exponential sophistication have taken place over the last few years in the field of medical sciences. These undoubtedly have increased longevity and relief from sickness but a lot is desired to be done with regard to handling care and attention to those who are sick and even to those who are dead & need to be laid to rest and peace with dignity and respect.

Many people, when they are in the hospital, find that their minds turn quite naturally to such questions as, "Why is there sickness?" "Why did this happen to me?" "Am I being punished?" "What is the meaning of life?" These questions are religious questions. Should such questions come to your mind, you might find comfort in the words of chaplains.

Excellent and close working relationship with architects, engineer's project supervisor and administrative manager could lead to a successful facility and not the usual hospital atmosphere of fear and dislike so that even the most reluctant visitors would not mind entering the hospital complex.

**Key Word:** - Chaplain Services, Chaplain, pastoral care, Healing Community, Chaplaincy Management Committee,

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Apart from better medical facilities and attention, sick people definitely deserve superior care, affection and respect in hospital settings. Thus, persons admitted in a tertiary care hospital not only need proper management of his physical and mental ailments but also a great majority of them require help for spiritual well being. And surprisingly the words of chaplains do provide, without fail, comfort to such distressed individuals.

When illness or injuries strike, it affects all irrespective of whom we are-not only our bodies but also our minds, our emotions and our spirituality are affected. Moreover, in recent times, spiritual health care is in the forefront all over the world with adoption of holistic health care programme globally. Chaplaincy services play a vital role with regard to patients, their families and staff members who are in spiritual distress by providing spiritual guidance, prayer, emotional support and comfort. The chaplaincy services are of immense utility to patients facing a life threatening medical diagnostic procedures or treatment and therefore having a desire for spiritual support. Their role during critical hours and during the sad demise of the patient is equally worth recalling. In a nutshell, each chaplain will ensure spiritual needs of the patients, their families and loved ones during their hospital visit and will serve as a member of the healing team, working closely with nurses, physicians, social workers and others who care for patients and their families.<sup>1</sup>

By definition Chaplaincy Services mean the 'Healing Community', Chaplain is an ordained or qualified layperson. Coordinating Chaplain is the approved Chaplain appointed for that purpose, whereas, volunteers are persons who have completed requirements of the medical centres volunteers service programme and have been assigned to the Chaplain Service Department.<sup>2</sup> Chaplain Service brings unique resources to deal with a variety of emotionally charged issues, which frequently arise in the hospital settings and seek to integrate their interventions with the patient plan of care. Chaplaincy Service Department thus prioritizes its pastoral care service primarily to the staff and the students and having thus prepared the community, together with them offers Pastoral Care Service to the patients. Chaplaincy Service includes emergency and referral-based spiritual care to patients of all types/ages, their families and to all staff members with three-fold emphasis, which includes:<sup>2</sup>

1. Comprehensive pastoral care to inmates, staff and their families;

2. The management of quality faith and character programming; and diverse religious volunteer participation; and
3. Community linkage with churches, synagogues, mosques and other faiths and character institutions to assist and enhance the Chaplaincy programme.

### **When should I call a Chaplain?**

Usual situations where chaplains are needed include: patients/families in spiritual distress; at time of diagnosis; making care decisions; change of goals of care (curative to palliative); and at times of dying/death/high risk of death. Besides, while facing a challenging or life-threatening medical diagnostic procedures or treatment, which can lead to deep desire for spiritual support. If you or a loved one confronts such circumstances, you may find comfort in speaking to a Chaplain. The Chaplain enables the person to identify and draw on her/his own spiritual strengths in facing such circumstances. Spiritual care of patients/families is always done in collaboration with the multidisciplinary care team. Chaplains frequently offer spiritual care to staff members around stressful patient care situations and personal life events.

### **How Chaplain can help you?**

- By providing support and encouragement to healthcare workers as they strive to meet the needs of patients and families.
- By bridging cultural and religious differences, fostering an institution and wide respect for each patient's spiritual beliefs.
- Share and sort confused emotions and fears.
- Receive prayer support and nonjudgmental guidance.
- Learn more about appropriate spiritual healthcare resources as well as local faith and religious community resources.

### **The Mission of the Chaplaincy Services is:**

- To provide patients, families, staff and community the experience of the compassion, love and healing presence of God. They believe each person is created in God's image, is loved by God unconditionally, and has the basic right of dignity and respect in life and death;
- To provide Chaplaincy Services to patients, families and staff of the hospital;
- To increase awareness of the role of spiritual values in patient care;
- To provide education for clergy and staff;
- To conduct research into the clinical care of the sick;
- To prepare for the needs and challenges of the future;
- To make the most efficient use of limited resources;
- To provide quality caring, effective, efficient, professional religious service to clients;
- To strengthen relationship with other disciplines in support of the orderly operation of and management of the institutions in the Departments of Home, Law & Justice and Jails & Prisons;
- To serve as a consultant for management regarding inmate request for religious services and other issues;
- To recognize and respond to the rapid change, growth and increasing complexity of the criminal justice system;
- To carry out this mission within the context of interdisciplinary integration and with respect for the spiritual, racial and gender diversity of the hospital; and

- The Chaplaincy also provides training and supervision in spiritual care giving for volunteers, field education students, clinical pastoral education students, and staff chaplain in addition, the Chaplaincy extends its teaching role in spiritual care to healthcare providers from non-pastoral disciplines.

### **Guiding Principles:**

- To be instruments of God's love, care and peace.
- To respect the value/worth of every person.
- To promote equality, fairness, justice and mercy.
- To treat others, as we want to be treated ourselves.

### **FUNCTIONS:**

The main function of the Chaplaincy Service is to establish a service that offers support, friendship and hospitality to anyone in search of spirituality and meaning in life. It is committed to the development of all facets of the individual by:

- Fostering the human and spiritual growth of individuals;
- Facilitating dialogue and collaboration;
- Providing mentoring and personal support;
- Providing opportunities for practice, expression and development of faith;
- Nurturing an environment where human diversity is respected; and
- Fostering mutual esteem, reverence and harmony within the community.

**Chaplaincy Services:** Chaplaincy services are meant for wide range of individuals varying from patients to the hospital staff.

**Patients-** For patients beside visitation, (especially to those patients who are lonely, anxious, awaiting diagnostic results) Chaplain is required for preparing of surgery and rejoicing with individuals when receiving good news. They are also needed for Sacrament and follow-up pastoral care and support.

**Families of Patients-** Chaplaincy services are needed for the families of patients who are critically ill or having major traumatic illness, who face long-term illness, at the time of death and while rejoicing over good news.

**To the Staff and Employees-** Similarly they may also be requested for the staff and employees of the hospital for consultation about patients, friendship and encouragement, informal conversational counseling, and pastoral support.

**To the Community-** Such services are important for referral to and from area pastors and local agencies.

**To the Medical Team-** Chaplaincy services may also be useful for the medical team to mobilize religious resources to contribute to the healing of persons, to understanding of religious meaning of illness and death, to communication link between the medical team, patient, family and community, for pastoral and friendly support.

**The Chaplaincy service has six distinct features:**

1. **Patient Care:** The Chaplain spends the major share of his/her time visiting patients and, for those who desire it, giving pastoral care to them and their relatives. This includes sacramental service, care to the terminally ill, bereavement care, and funeral arrangements.
2. **Staff Care:** The Chaplain visits the departments and acts as a facilitator in their weekly spiritual study meeting.
3. **Student Care:** One-hour spiritual/general religious class.
4. **Teaching:** The Chaplaincy Department was started in 1994, for the first time in India. A Post BD Diploma in Pastoral Education (CPE) is a one-year course with the maximum intake of five students. The staff also teaches short courses in counseling to the nursing, allied health and other groups of students.

5. **Worship:** Provides barrier free office and worship space to a worshipping community.
6. **Patient Safety:** Chaplains regularly visit patients. They are trained annually about violence in the workplace, so that they can properly respond to potentially dangerous situation that may occur. In addition, Chaplains participate in 'Treatment Team' meetings during which special safety concerns such as the need for restraints or historically disruptive behaviour can be addressed therapeutically. In the event of fire in an inpatient unit, Chaplains function at the direction of the fire officer and nursing staff on the scene to assist with evacuation procedure, when asked.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Administrative Responsibilities:**

- Address religious issues of all faiths
- Advise staff on religious issues
- Supervise religious activities
- Plan and facilitate religious activities
- Participate in meetings and training
- Identify and provide resources for all faiths

#### **Ministerial Responsibilities:**

- To conduct and facilitate religious services and studies
- To counsel inmates, staff and families
- To provide pastoral care to inmates, staff and families

In addition, Chaplaincy Offices may also provide, weekly worship opportunities, rituals and sacraments, religious education classes, religious holiday observation, Ramadan, revivals, support groups, crisis counseling, death notifications, bereavement counseling, marriage enrichment seminars, self esteem seminars,

anger management, mentoring, sacred text studies, conquering addictions, chapel choir, chapel library, cell to cell visitation, literature distribution and diverse and numerous religious volunteer participation.<sup>1</sup>

### **Physical Facilities:**

The chaplaincy services would provide barrier free office and worship place.

### **Staffing Structure:**

The departments should be staffed with certified Chaplains. The volunteer service department also assigns trained volunteers. Certified Chaplains demonstrate skill and continued competence in the ability to assess plan, document, supervise and evaluate the spiritual care of patients, families and staff. Volunteers would assist with patient screening and the facilitation of specific, identified spiritual practices under the direction of a certified Chaplain. Chaplains assigned to nursing units to provide consistent pastoral presence as well as specialty experience in meeting the spiritual needs of the high-risk patient's population. A staff member is available at all times to meet emergent needs that require immediate attention.<sup>3</sup>

### **A. Service Staff Role and Responsibilities**

#### **1) Chief, Chaplain Service**

Supervises and coordinates the activities of Chaplain Service under the direct supervision of Director/ Medical Superintendent of the hospital. Coordinates performance improvement program in consultation with full Chaplain Service by monitoring data and coordinating with other disciplines.

#### **2) Staff Chaplains**

Provide comprehensive religious service to inpatients and family in the hospital and are available by consult to all outpatient clinics. Chaplains on staff are from various religious groups. Staff Chaplains report to Chief, Chaplain Service. They

are available to staff for consultation and support in times of crisis. They function ecumenically as clinical members of treatment teams on assigned units, conduct spiritual assessments as appropriate, respond to SOS calls provide liaison community leaders and besides providing general & private ward visits.

### **3) Secretary, Chaplain Service**

Provides full range of secretarial and administrative duties and assures accessibility of the Chapels at worship place.

### **B. Availability of Service Staff**

1) Chaplains are assigned to daytime duty schedules seven days per week. When staffing allows at least one chaplain of each religion is on duty during the day. Tours of duty range from 6:15 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

2) Chaplains have primary coverage areas, but are available to back each other up during their duty time for the priority service events such as emergency consultation or seriously ill and death notifications. This means that while one chaplain is primarily assigned to cover the ICU areas, the others may and often do respond to emergencies in this area as well. Callback emergencies after hours are either answered by staff chaplains on a rotating basis, or by scheduled fee-basis chaplains employed for this function.

### **C. Core Staffing**

- 1) One Chaplain of each sect (any Denomination) working daytime shift, all days.
- 2) On Call Chaplain for Emergencies or Consultations.

### **Communication Methods with Service Staff**

Daily phone and e-mail contact is the primary informal method of communicating with all staff. Chief, Chaplain Service has primary duty responsibility in his office, where staffs have almost daily contact and communication with the Chief due to shared pastoral responsibilities. Two monthly staff meetings should also be held, giving every staff member the opportunity to provide input to key decisions made

in the Service. Each staff member should have at least one face to face meeting with the Chief privately during each month or more often if needed.<sup>4</sup>

### **Organizational Relationship**

**A. Reporting Relationships** Service Chief Reports to Director/ Medical Superintendent, Chaplains report to Chief, Chaplain Service.

### **B. Decision making**

Decision-making is done through a process of regular communication and consensus with Service members, which include personal contact with chief at least monthly and Staff meetings consisting of the entire Chaplain Service twice monthly. Each member of the Staff is authorized to sign for receipt of supplies. One staff chaplain has additional authority to act as back-up leave and timecard approval officials when called upon to do so. Responsibility for overall supervision of Chaplain Service rests with Chief, Chaplain Service.<sup>3</sup>

### **C. Reporting**

Chaplain Service reviews data from monitors of all service delivery processes monthly and reports of activities should be addressed to Director/ Medical Superintendent identified for improvement of services through identified Strategies and Initiatives.

Each chaplain should report workload through 'Event Capture System' by means of regular data entry.<sup>4</sup>

### **Contacting a chaplain after office hours/leaving a message for a chaplain:**

Due to limited staff, chaplains can be made available after 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. only for emergency or special needs. If one has emergent need for Chaplaincy support, request can be made to hospital staff members to call/paged the chaplain on call.

Chaplains usually respond to visitation request, special interventions or emergency situations, if they are not available when you call, then you leave a message. A Chaplaincy Service staff member will contact as soon as possible to arrange a visit. You may also speak with a chaplain during hospital rounds.

Chaplains would often make rounds as a means of establishing contact with patients and their families.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Chaplaincy Services play a major role in respect to spiritual care of ill patients in a tertiary care hospital, where health is considered in totality. As a member of healing team, an equally important role is visualized during critical hours and sad demise of an ill patient. Besides, Chaplaincy services definitely lessen the grief of relatives during postmortem period by offering prayers and consoling words bereavement care and funeral arrangements. Let it be an integral part of a total health care programme undertaken at a tertiary care hospital.

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