



### **Executive Summary:**

St. Joseph's Wayne Hospital strives to embrace and accommodate individuals of all racial, ethnic and faith backgrounds. The hospital asks patients during admission whether there are any cultural, ethnic or spiritual needs that are important for them to know about to include in patients' plans of care. Nurses and other care providers then utilize the information provided to ensure each patient receives culturally appropriate care, including the food they are served and visits from the pastoral care staff. The hospital's pastoral care staff meets regularly with local religious leaders to understand each faith's beliefs and perspectives surrounding patient care, pain management and end of life issues. The pastoral care staff regularly communicates patient care issues to hospital employees, and staff is provided with a reference manual that describes various cultural/religious beliefs and practices, providing special instructions and guidance to staff for how to provide care to each group. The hospital celebrates every religious holiday, and publishes a monthly Interfaith Calendar. St. Joseph's Wayne Hospital also conducts community outreach to specific minority and faith-based groups. The hospital recently hosted a health fair for a nearby Middle Eastern community, including health screenings, a nutritionist with knowledge of Middle Eastern food preferences and translation services. Women's health and information about breast self-exams were located in a secluded area without men present.

**Organization Size:** 211 Beds

### **Program/Initiative Descriptions:**

St. Joseph's Wayne Hospital strives to embrace and accommodate individuals of all racial, ethnic and faith backgrounds. The hospital asks all patients during admission whether there are any cultural, ethnic or spiritual needs that are important for them to know about to include in patients' plans of care. Nurses and other staff utilize this response as a reference to plan for the care each patient will receive. For example, if an individual's faith impacts his or her dietary needs, the hospital's dietary department is notified and accommodations are made. If the patient is a Muslim woman, staff is aware that male employees must wait until her husband is present before entering the room. If a woman prefers to have her head covered, staff will always knock and wait to give her time to cover her head before entering. When patients specify a specific religion during admission, the hospital ensures that the appropriate clergy member is contacted to visit the patient. Copies of the Bible, Koran and other religious documents are available to patients during their stay in the hospital.

The hospital staff is also provided with a reference manual that describes various cultural/religious beliefs and practices, providing special instructions and guidance to staff for how to provide care to each group. The manual outlines how different cultural and faith-based groups feel about pain, how pain is expressed and beliefs and practices surrounding birth and death. The hospital's pastoral care staff also works closely with clergy in the community to discuss how each faith feels about end of life care, pain management and other issues surrounding hospital care. Constant communication between the hospital's pastoral care staff and employees helps communicate new issues that emerge as the pastoral care staff meets with local clergy members.

In addition, the pastoral care staff ensures that all religious holidays are celebrated. Holidays such as Ramadan, Hanukkah, Christmas and Eid are celebrated through rituals, posters and internal e-mails underscoring the significance of the holy day for a particular group. A monthly Interfaith Calendar is also published and regularly distributed to employees.

In addition to providing culturally competent care when patients are admitted to the hospital, St. Joseph's Wayne Hospital reaches out to diverse community groups through its health promotion and education efforts. The hospital recently hosted a health fair in a Middle Eastern community in Patterson, NJ. Health screenings such as blood pressure and cholesterol measurements were supplemented by translation services and a nutritionist with specific information about the culture's diet preferences to help individuals address health issues such as high cholesterol and diabetes. The fair taught women about breast self-exams, but held the booth in a discrete area with no men to ensure women felt comfortable.

**Establishment of Programs/Initiatives:** March 2001

**Racial or Ethnic Disparities Problem the Programs/Initiatives Were Designed to Address:** Although St. Joseph's Wayne Hospital's patients are primarily Caucasian, a small percentage are Turkish and Middle Eastern, African American and Hispanic; many of the patients have different faith bases that impact the type of care they seek, ranging from preferences in pastoral care to dietary needs

**Major Objectives:** As a faith-based institution, welcome and embrace people of all faiths

**Significant Results:** Although the results are not easily measurable, accommodating and welcoming patients of all faith bases has become part of the organization's daily activity

**External Partners in the Programs/Initiatives:** Local faith-based organizations

**Limitations or Problems Encountered:** None; pastoral volunteers and the pastoral staff both meet with patients every day, allowing emerging concerns to be addressed immediately

**Estimated Cost of the Programs, To Date:** N/A

**Advice to Other Organizations That May Want to Start Similar Programs:**

- Strong relationships with the local community is highly important; community members can provide advice and partnerships
- Meet with the clergy of each religion and ask what the hospital should do in specific care situations, how providers can be more sensitive and what providers should be aware of when providing care to individuals of that religion

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