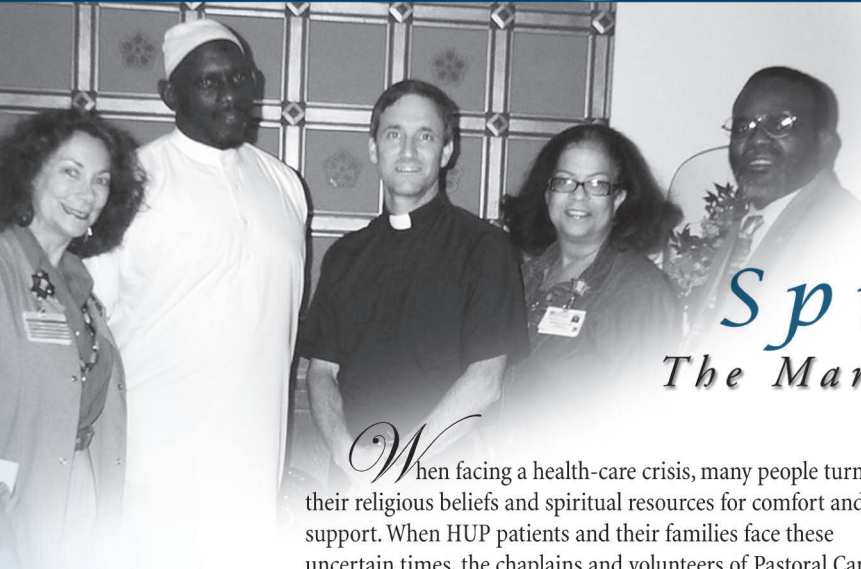


HUPdate

Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania

Volume 18, Number 16
August 3, 2007



Members of the Pastoral Care team include (l. to r.) Linda Joy Goldner, Imam Amin Aziz, Father Charles Zlock, Denise Statham, and David Henfield.

HUP's *Spiritual Side* *The Many Faces of Pastoral Care*

When facing a health-care crisis, many people turn to their religious beliefs and spiritual resources for comfort and support. When HUP patients and their families face these uncertain times, the chaplains and volunteers of Pastoral Care services provide the emotional and spiritual care they need.

This around-the-clock support is supplied by Pastoral Care's four staff chaplains, 10 to 12 student chaplains from its Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program, and a number of volunteer pastoral visitors which represent a range of faiths.

Together they made over 30,000 individual patient and family member contacts last year.

Interfaith Model

One facet of HUP's pastoral care is based on the interfaith model. Explained Rev. **Ralph Ciampa, STM**, director of

Pastoral Care, "Our chaplains will meet with any patient who might be receptive. Their conversations aim to help each patient connect with his or her own faith."

Patient's learn about the program through a brochure that is part of every admissions package. In addition, while taking down patient history information, nurses also ask specific questions about whether the patient has any religious or spiritual needs. "In this way, our services can be initiated by the patient or through the nurse."

Staff chaplains circulate throughout the patient units several times a week, visiting the ICUs daily and meeting as many new patients throughout the hospital as possible.

To ensure 24/7 coverage, Pastoral Care provides on-call resident chaplains from its CPE program, from its Adjunct Chaplain Group, and from the staff chaplain team, who are responsible for taking care of all needs that emerge, regardless of religious affiliation — including approximately 2,600 trauma alerts a year.

(Continued on Page 2)

Spirit of Caring Awardees



Imam Amin Aziz

Starting in 1995, Pastoral Care has honored 18 people whose contributions and compassion have helped many HUP patients through difficult times. This year, two more people were added to the Spirit of Caring Award list.

Shariff Blackwell of Environmental Services is a familiar face in the emergency room, but he goes beyond just caring for the physical environment. "He also responds to the human vulnerability of patients, families, and staff as he encounters them in these most critical moments of their lives," said **Rev Ralph Ciampa**, director of Pastoral Care. "His spirit of warmth, calm, and hospitality help ease many tense and trying experiences."

As head of Islamic Pastoral Care in the Delaware Valley, Imam Amin Aziz — and his colleagues — has brought support to HUP's Islamic patients. "Several times a year, he teaches our Pastoral Care students and staff about spiritual care for Islamic patients," Ciampa noted. "He brings a spirit of genuineness and openness that invites true cooperation on behalf of all our patients and families."



Ralph Ciampa (l.) and
Shariff Blackwell



(continued from page 1)

"The chaplains respond to any emergency in the hospital, but most of the calls — at night — are from the Emergency Department. It's not unheard of to get 10-15 calls a night from there," Ciampa said. "And we respond to every trauma within five minutes and become the main liaison between family members and the trauma team."

Filling Specific Needs

Most of the time, the interfaith model meets patients' needs, but, from time to time, people prefer or need specific rites and activities of their own religious group. "We have been responsive to various religious denominations that want to designate someone who is qualified and would like to represent their faith group at HUP," Ciampa said. "We'll give the person some training as to how pastoral care is done here and will make them full-fledged hospital volunteers."

Once religious representatives have completed this entire process, they can receive a list of patients who have identified themselves with that particular faith. Ciampa added that individual clergy who have not received training can always receive information about a specific congregational member.

The Roman Catholic Diocese wholly supports this partnership. Priests and Lay Eucharistic ministers from the parish church of St. Agatha-St. James have been "incredibly generous and dedicated in voluntarily providing a range of religious ministries — including around-the-clock emergency visits — to HUP and several other area hospitals," Ciampa said. A priest comes six days a week to see new Catholic patients and to follow up on top priorities. "On Thursdays and Sundays, Lay Eucharistic ministers attempt to offer communion for all Catholic patients."

The Spirituality-Medicine Connection

Pastoral Care provides many services to support patients during their hospital stay, but the staff also researches the connection between spirituality and medicine. One study is currently investigating the impact of illness and treatment on dimensions of spirituality for oncology patients.

"We're examining the experience of patients going through aggressive treatment to understand the impact it has on their spiritual life," said **Ralph Ciampa**. Once we have results, we'll teach this to our students and keep the dialogue going with the general community about spirituality.

"One way we foster that dialog is through a monthly Spirituality, Religion, and Health Interest Group which the department has sponsored for the past eight years," he said. "The group brings together disciplines from all over the Philadelphia area to explore a fascinating series of topics regarding this important dimension of health care."

Ciampa explained that because the St. Agatha-St. James parish has such extensive responsibilities throughout the city, "we try very hard to identify and relay all the sacramental requests and other needs during their regular visiting hours at HUP. This helps minimize the need to call them back for emergencies."

The Jewish community also responds to the call. A group of students from the Penn Hillel trained as volunteers visits as many Jewish patients as possible on Saturdays and Fridays. "They regularly bring small challahs on Friday and small packages for Hanukah or other holidays," said **Rabbi Robert Tabak, PhD**, one of HUP's staff chaplains.

In addition, trained parachaplains from the Jewish Family and Children's Services of Philadelphia offer "prayer and other religious resources for Jewish patients" Ciampa said.

Imam Amin Aziz, head of the Islamic Pastoral Care of Delaware Valley, has been filling the needs of HUP's Islamic patients for 10 years. "I get calls from Pastoral Care, from family members, or sometimes from an employee who's calling for an Islamic patient," he said. "I teach them prayers and talk with them."

"In fact, I'll talk with any patients, no matter what the religion," he added, "just to help them feel better."

"Imam Aziz is very responsive," Ciampa noted. "And because the Islamic faith has gender considerations, the Imam will often bring a female member of his staff to respond to female patients."

The department can also contact designated persons and clergy from various other faith group, should the need arise.

Pastoral Care holds interfaith prayer services Monday through Friday at noon, in the Interfaith Chapel on 1 Dulles, and an Ecumenical Christian Service every Sunday.

In addition, the department offers services for many of the principal religious holidays. It also makes sure the staff is aware of patients' special dietary needs, such as Jewish patients keeping kosher or Passover or Muslim patients fasting during Ramadan.

Educational and Community Components

Another element of Pastoral Care is its Clinical Pastoral Education program. This nationally accredited program helps its students — many of whom are already on their way to becoming ordained clergy of many faiths — learn the basic skill of pastoral conversation and other interactions to bring comfort and support in a hospital setting. During the nine-month, fulltime program, students provide hundreds of hours of patient care activity, while summer chaplain interns pack 300 hours into the 11-week program.

