



## **STANDARDS FOR HEALTH CARE CHAPLAINCY IN EUROPE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

*Standards for Health Care Chaplaincy in Europe* is a collective statement, which expresses the caring work of faith groups in the area of health care throughout Europe. It is meant to be a point of reference and a guide for all faiths and denominations in shaping spiritual care offered in the area of health care. The title of the person who offers spiritual care varies from faith to faith, denomination to denomination, tradition to tradition, nation to nation. In this document the terms *chaplain* and *pastoral* are considered as generally accepted terms, but are not restrictive.

This document is the result of the 7<sup>th</sup> Consultation of the European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy, meeting at Turku, Finland 12-16 June 2002, at which 40 representatives of churches and organisations, representing 21 European countries participated. The document draws on the experience of the different traditions represented and brings together standards in health care chaplaincy from Europe and beyond.

### **1. HEALTH CARE CHAPLAINCY**

Chaplaincy provides pastoral services in a variety of health care settings, ministering to the existential, spiritual and religious needs of those who suffer and those who care for them, drawing on personal, faith, cultural and community resources.

### **2. THE ORGANISATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHAPLAINCY SERVICES**

1. Chaplaincy services are organised in different ways in different European countries. This is shaped by:
  - a. religious faith group administration.
  - b. health care institutions.
  - c. state health care regulations and policies.
  - d. chaplaincy associations.
2. Chaplaincy services are delivered by clergy and lay persons who have been professionally trained in the area of pastoral care. They are authorised by their faith community and recognised by the health care system.
3. Chaplaincy services work as part of the multi-disciplinary team.

### **3. AREAS OF ACTIVITY OF CHAPLAINCY**

Chaplains are present for patients, relatives, other persons close to them, visitors and staff:

1. to proclaim and defend the infinite value and dignity of every person.
2. to be a reminder of the existential and spiritual dimension of suffering, illness and death.
3. to provide a reminder of the healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling power of religious faith.
4. to endeavour to see that the spiritual needs of people from different religious or cultural backgrounds are met, respecting everyone's beliefs.
5. to try to protect patients from unwelcome spiritual intrusion or proselytising.
6. to provide supportive spiritual care through empathic listening, demonstrating an understanding of those in distress.
7. to provide religious worship, ritual, and sacrament according to one's religious tradition.
8. to serve as members of the multi-disciplinary health care team
9. to provide and participate in teaching programmes for health care professionals.
10. to act as mediator and reconciler and provide advocacy for those who need a voice in the health care system.
11. to support and participate in research programmes about spiritual care.
12. to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of providing spiritual care.
13. to facilitate community awareness of the needs and demands of the people they serve, the carers and health care systems.

### **4. THEOLOGICAL, PASTORAL AND ETHICAL MATTERS**

Chaplaincy is a resource on theological, pastoral and ethical matters, being involved in programmes and discussions concerning:

- a. theological and pastoral issues.
- b. spiritual/existential needs and values.
- c. ethical (including biomedical) issues.
- d. the improvement of pastoral health care.

### **5. EDUCATION, FORMATION AND SUPERVISION**

Those working in chaplaincy receive professional training throughout their ministry at a level appropriate to their appointment. This process includes:

- a. theological and pastoral education and reflection.
- b. awareness of health care issues.
- c. practical/clinical supervision.
- d. spiritual guidance.