



Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry Position Statement on the Role of Parish Nurses in the Context of Complex Ethical Issues

Adopted [January 2026]

Preamble

The Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry (CAPNM) affirms the sacred and professional commitment of Parish Nurses – also known in some context as Faith Community Nurses - to remain a compassionate, faithful, and nonjudgmental presence in the lives of those they serve. In a rapidly changing and diverse society, we recognize that Parish Nurses often walk alongside individuals facing painful, personal, and ethically complex decisions – including, but not limited to, Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD), reproductive health, gender identity, and vaccine hesitancy. These moments often unfold under the weight of suffering, grief and uncertainty – and it is precisely here that compassionate presence matters most.

Statement

As Parish Nurses, we are called—both professionally and spiritually—to provide holistic, ethically responsible, and deeply compassionate care to every person entrusted to us, regardless of their beliefs, identities, or choices. This calling requires more than clinical skill. It demands presence – the kind that offers dignity, listens without judgement, and remains when others retreat.

We are not arbiters of another’s journey, but companions on the road. In moments of suffering, our presence becomes our ministry. We hold space for grief, confusion, fear and hope – not to fix, but to *be with*.

We uphold the dignity and inherent worth of each person, offering care that is grounded in humility, love and freedom from abandonment—especially when choices may differ from our own beliefs. When beliefs diverge or choices challenge our convictions, we stay. We show up. We still love.

As followers of Christ, we are reminded to “*bear one another’s burdens*” (*Galatians 6:2*). This call draws us toward – not away from – suffering. It compels us to listen gently, remain courageously, and respond compassionately when judgement might feel easier.

Conclusion

The Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry upholds the role of Parish Nurses – or Faith Community Nurses - as trusted witnesses to suffering and grace. In complexity, we stay. We reaffirm that compassionate presence is not secondary to care – it is the heart of it. In caring presence, we stay. In suffering, we serve. In all things, we love.