



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**24th ANNUAL MERCY PARISH NURSE AND HEALTH MINISTRY SYMPOSIUM
TO FOCUS ON MARGINALIZED INDIVIDUALS AND TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE**
“Who Is My Neighbor: The Mission Field for Faith and Health”

PITTSBURGH (August 31, 2016) – The [Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program](#), part of [Pittsburgh Mercy](#) and [Trinity Health](#), serving in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy, invites health care professionals, clergy, social workers, licensed professional counselors, and others interested in whole-person health to attend the **24th Annual Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Symposium, “Who Is My Neighbor: The Mission Field for Faith and Health,”** which will be held on **Saturday, October 22, 2016**, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., in the Sister M. Ferdinand Clark Auditorium, Level 2 at UPMC Mercy, 1400 Locust Street, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15219 (Uptown).

Held annually since 1992, the symposium provides continuing education, resources, and networking opportunities to individuals who have or are interested in starting health ministries in their faith communities, as well as the general public.

Providing wholistic care of body, mind, and spirit is a specific aim when doing health ministry. Typically the focus is on actively caring for members within a faith community. This symposium moves that aim beyond defined ecumenical boundaries, and intersects faith and health concerns across diverse social avenues, including those marginalized in our society because of issues with homelessness, hunger, poverty, and other experiences of trauma. Theological and ethical concerns are relevant issues that need addressed, as well as skills and tools to help professionals with best practices in trauma-informed care.

One such toolkit is the Mental Health First Aid USA resource. Peer-reviewed studies from Australia and across the globe show that the program saves lives, improves the mental health

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of the individual administering care and the one receiving it, expands knowledge of mental illnesses and their treatments, increases the services provided, and reduces overall social distance toward individuals with mental illnesses by improving mental health literacy, according to www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org. At the symposium, participants will be challenged through interactive discussion of case studies and stories that will broaden perspectives and help one find renewal to continue serving others when faced with burnout or compassion fatigue.

Symposium speakers include:

- The Rev. George S. Steffey, author, pastor, and retired chaplain and director of Behavioral Health Services at East Liberty Family Health Care Center.
- Alexis K. Weber, MSN, RN, faith community and psychiatric nurse, educator, retired director of Mercy School of Nursing, Catholic Charities USA 2015 Volunteer of the Year, manager of a local food pantry, and clinic nurse for the homeless.
- Mark Rogalsky, MSW, TTS, psychotherapist, prevention specialist, and unit manager of Prevention Services at Pittsburgh Mercy.

The target audience for this symposium includes faith community nurses; clergy; seminarians; lay health ministers, pastoral and social ministers; social workers; licensed professional counselors; physicians; health care professionals; students and others who are interested in promoting whole-person health. This interactive symposium lets participants broaden their perspective regarding trauma-informed care, as well as gain personal enrichment in one's own spiritual being.

Upon completion of the symposium, participants will be able to:

- Understand the spiritual dynamics of what constitutes a marginalized individual and faith community identity.
- Identify ways one can contribute to improving the wholistic health of those viewed as marginalized within and beyond faith communities.
- Comprehend the purpose and use of the Mental Health First Aid toolkit when working with diverse communities.

Continuing education (3.5 CEU) will be offered to registered nurses, social workers, and licensed professional counselors who attend.

The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) is accredited as a provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. National Association of Social Workers-PA Chapter (NASW-PA) is a co-sponsor of this workshop. 3.5 CEs will be awarded for completion of this course. NASW has been designated as a pre-approved provider of professional continuing education for social workers (Section 47.36), Marriage and Family Therapist (Section 48.36) and Professional Counselors (Section 49.36) by the PA State Board of Social Workers, Marriage & Family Therapists and Professional

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Counselors. Participants who attend the entire session and complete an evaluation form will be awarded a certificate and 3.5 contact hours for the symposium attended. UPMC, American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), and NASW-PA do not endorse any commercial products as a result of the CE activity.

The cost is **\$40** for registered nurses, social workers, and licensed professional counselors who wish to receive 3.5 continuing education credits; **\$30** for those who do not wish to receive continuing education credits; and **\$20** for undergraduate students and seminarians. The cost includes lunch and free parking in the UPMC Mercy's Locust Street Parking Garage, (entrance located at Locust and Stevenson streets).

Registration is accepted by U.S. Mail only. Seating capacity is limited. Early registration is encouraged. The deadline to register is Friday, **October 14, 2016**. To register, visit https://www.pittsburghmercy.org/pdf/Form_PNP_Symposium_Registration_10222016.pdf.

For more information, contact the [Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program](#) at 412-232-5815 or email ParishNurse@pittsburghmercy.org.

About the Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program

Established in 1991, the [Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program](#), part of [Pittsburgh Mercy](#) and serving in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy, was the first parish nurse program in Southwestern Pennsylvania. The program integrates faith and health, has served more than 4,000 health care professionals and others who volunteer in their faith communities, and has commissioned nearly 400 faith community nurses and health ministers through its faith community nurse preparation course. To learn more about the Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program, or to make a donation in support of its important work in our community, visit www.pittsburghmercy.org.

About Pittsburgh Mercy Health System

[Pittsburgh Mercy](#), a part of [Trinity Health](#), serving in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy, is one of the largest health and human service nonprofit organizations and is also one of the largest employers in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh Mercy includes Bethlehem Haven, McAuley Ministries, Mercy Behavioral Health, Mercy Community Health, Mercy Intellectual Disabilities Services, Mercy Parish Nurse and Health Ministry Program, Operation Safety Net®, and Pittsburgh Mercy Family Health Center. Together, these Pittsburgh Mercy programs and their 1,700 employees serve more than 33,000 individuals annually at 60+ locations in Southwestern Pennsylvania. To learn more about [Pittsburgh Mercy](#), or to make a donation in support of its important work in the community, visit www.pittsburghmercy.org.

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