

## New Standards of Practice for Professional Chaplains Approved by APC Board

By Brent Peery BCC

At their November meeting, the Association of Professional Chaplains Board of Directors approved the final draft of a new **Standards of Practice for Professional Chaplains**. This is a continuation of our profession's ongoing growth and evolution.

In the last five years, APC has produced standards of practice documents for acute care (2010), long-term care (2012), and hospice and palliative care (2014). The remarkable similarities between these three documents illustrate how similar the work of professional chaplains is across the wide variety of professional settings in which we serve. There are, no doubt, nuanced context-driven differences between the work of various professional chaplains. However, it became increasingly clear that we might be able to identify a particular set of knowledge, practices, skills and values that characterize the work of a professional chaplain, regardless of workplace. The APC Quality in Chaplaincy Care Committee began to see the value in crafting one document to describe our practice.

In January 2015, a task force was assembled to produce the new inclusive standards of practice document. Members of the task force represented experience in the following professional chaplaincy contexts: acute care, crisis/disaster, geriatrics, hospice, long-term care, mental health, military, palliative care, pediatrics, sports and workplace. We also sought to choose language inclusive of all professional chaplaincy specialty settings. The task force produced a document and then revised the document to its current version after several months of review and feedback from professional chaplains. Leaders from other professions who work with chaplains also provided input.

Standards of Practice for Professional Chaplains is intended to shape our practice, improve our chaplaincy care and help us tell the story of professional chaplaincy to others. The APC Board of Directors has recommended the peer review process for board certified chaplains center on these standards. They will additionally give focus to professional development and goals for chaplains. The standards also briefly describe our work to those outside the profession and help differentiate it from amateur facsimiles thereof.

Moving forward, the APC Quality in Chaplaincy Care Committee will be enlisting several task forces to produce companion documents for Standards of Practice for Professional Chaplains to elaborate on the particular ways the standards of practice are fleshed out in different chaplaincy settings. If you would like to volunteer to serve on a task force to develop a context-specific companion document or have questions regarding the standards of practice, please contact the APC national office, [info@apchaplains.org](mailto:info@apchaplains.org).

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