

## **Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton Position Description for Roman Catholic Volunteer Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Sick in Hospitals/Nursing Home/Care Centers**

---

**Position Title:** Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Sick

**Reports To:** Institutional Spiritual Care department (Name of Institution)  
Volunteer Services (Name of Institution)  
Parish priest or designate

**Primary Objective:**

To provide all Roman Catholic patients/residents the opportunity to receive Holy Communion. Minister to the sick and shut-in and provide a connection to and from the parish community.

**Principle Responsibilities:**

- Act as a liaison with the community via the Pastor or his designate
- Know the appropriate liturgy for distribution of the Eucharist
- Maintain confidentiality of all patient /resident information

**Skills and Qualifications:**

- Baptized practicing Catholic
- Active member of a parish community
- Good communication skills
- Good listener
- Ability to maintain boundaries appropriate to the role of a volunteer as per Archdiocesan and Covenant Health Volunteer Policies
- Dependability
- Ability to relate and respond respectfully
- Ability to remain objective
- Archdiocesan 'Ministry of Care Program for Volunteers' Certificate
- Volunteer and Spiritual Care Department orientations
- Testimonial letter from parish priest

**Physical Requirements**

- Involves ability to move safely throughout sometimes hospital/nursing home/care center/private home
- Good health on day of assignment

**Cautions to be Exercised**

- Confidentiality of patient/resident information.
- Precautionary hygiene: Do not enter room of patients/residents in **isolation requiring N95 masks and gown**. For all other isolation rooms, follow prescribed protocol (usually posted outside the room) at the direction of care unit staff.
- Be aware some patient's may be hearing and/or sight impaired.
- Your health and other personal concerns are not to be brought to the relationship of Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and patient/resident.

## **Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton Position Description for Roman Catholic Volunteer Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Sick in Hospitals/Nursing Home/Care Centers**

---

- Personal hygiene is critical: scented products of any sort are not to be used as they may harm or upset patients/residents.
- If the patient/resident seems confused, do not provide the host. Instead you may say a prayer of blessing or offer a Spiritual Communion.
- Some patients/residents may be NPO (nothing by mouth). Check with unit staff for clarification.

### **Orientation/Description of Duties**

- As per hospital/nursing home/care center/private home requirements

### **Time Commitment**

- As per schedule requirements

### **Screening Procedure**

- As per Archdiocesan Volunteer Management Policies Guidelines/Institutional Volunteer Services

### **Summary of In-service:**

#### **Confidentiality**

1. Religion printout is confidential information. All information regarding the patient is confidential.
2. The patient's/resident's parish, friends, relatives **shall not be contacted** without the permission of the patient.
3. Do not leave religious literature, of any kind, unless the patient specifically requests it.
4. Patient's/resident's address shall not be used for home follow-up.
5. No proselytizing e.g. attempting to convert, instructing or visiting people of other faith groups while visiting for your Faith Group. This is considered disrespectful of the other person's belief and your visiting position will be terminated.  
Personal information the patient/resident shares with you is not to be discussed with anyone at any time, **but**, *if you know something that you believe, if not told, would put someone at risk, then you should inform your area supervisor (Spiritual Care staff) or the Manager/Coordinator of Volunteer Services. Use of this information for other purposes is a breach of confidentiality that can become a legal issue.(Covenant Health)*

Covenant Health, Alberta Health Services and the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton have Policies on Volunteer Management. Respect of persons is embedded in those policies. Abuse will not be tolerated. You are expected to make yourself familiar with the information pertaining to your volunteer activity from documentation provided by the Spiritual Care and Volunteer Offices.

**All new Volunteers to Covenant Health must provide a Police Information Check in accordance with the Protection for Persons in Care Act.**

**Provincial regulations require all health care workers (staff and volunteers) to provide the following information prior to placement: Proof of exposure to varicella (Chicken pox); proof of immunization for MMR (measles, mumps, Rubella). Screening for tuberculosis may also be required.**

## **Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton Position Description for Roman Catholic Volunteer Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Sick in Hospitals/Nursing Home/Care Centers**

---

**As the Volunteer Policy indicates, those persons who provide ministry to High Risk population groups must meet the requirements of the Screening process (Police Information Check/Criminal Records Check (Vulnerable Sector Check), Interventions Record Check).**

**In addition, all volunteers who provide ministry to hospitals/nursing homes/care centers must take a Called To Protect™ Training Session and the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton Pastoral Care Training Certificate Program.**

### **General Guidelines Preparing for your Visit:**

These guidelines are specific to visits to hospitals/nursing homes/care centers. For private home pastoral visits follow the guidelines in the Volunteer Management Policy.

Check with your Pastor or Volunteer Coordinator to receive a list of patients/residents to visit.

Upon arriving at the hospitals/nursing homes/care centers, the team will receive the list of patients to be visited. Once your team has received the list, plan your visit in the hospital. You may come into the health care institution as a team (2 or more) however a patient visit can be supplied by one pastoral visitor. Some assistance may be provided from the Spiritual Care Office, Staff Chaplain or Volunteer Services Coordinator of the institution or health facility.

### **Procedures:**

1. Stop at the nurses' desk/reception. Check with staff. Tell them who you are, why you are there, the parish you are representing and ask if this is a good time for a visit. Sometimes the nurses will advise you of recent medication, pain or sleep patterns.
2. If the door to the patient's room is closed, ask the nurse if it is okay to enter. Be careful to observe notices such as "No Visiting" or "Isolation" signs. Knock on the door and enter upon the invitation of the patient. Do not close the door or completely close the curtain around the patient's bed. Hospital staff must be free to enter the patient's room.
3. Always allow the patient to take the lead in shaking hands. Some patients do not/are not comfortable or are unable to do so. Do not initiate this practice.
4. Do not sit or lean on the patient's bed – patients can be in pain and this move can increase their pain. Please stand or sit in line with the patient's line of vision. This will allow for ease of conversation.
5. If there are other patients in the room, please acknowledge their presence. Roommates are often appreciative in being recognized.
6. Do not make visits too long (no longer than 15 minutes preferable 10 minutes)