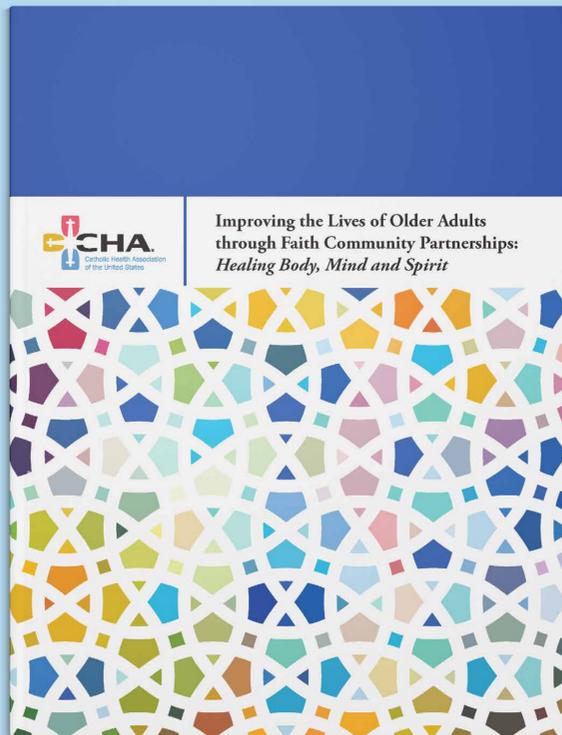


# Improving the Lives of Older Adults THROUGH FAITH COMMUNITIES

## BACKGROUND

*Today, 13 million Americans will need personal assistance or other supports. By mid-century, this number is expected to double. More than 80 percent live at home and the vast majority of their care is provided by family members and friends. While the health care system is essential to many frail older people, most can remain at home with adequate support and assistance. Part of that support and assistance can come from health care organizations themselves and from faith-based communities — parishes, churches, synagogues, mosques and other congregations.*



*“Health, in the biblical perspective, means wholeness — not only physical, but also spiritual and psychological wholeness; not only individual, but social and institutional wholeness.”*

— Health and Health Care: A Pastoral Letter of the American Catholic Bishops

## WHY PARTNER?

### ADVANTAGES TO HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS

- + Augment discharge and navigation programs
- + Reduce admissions, re-admissions
- + Improve outcomes
- + Help fulfill mission and tax-exempt purpose

### ADVANTAGES FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES

- + Strengthen sense of community among congregation
- + Reconnect with congregants no longer involved in congregation
- + Support the work of staff and clergy
- + Free up time of staff and clergy for other responsibilities

### ADVANTAGES FOR CONGREGANTS

- + Support for family caregivers
- + Sense of belonging and connectedness to faith community
- + Better connection to health care system
- + Assistance for living at home
- + Spiritual support

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

### WHAT HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO

- + Host meetings of local clergy, describe services, find out about needs in their congregations
- + Hold wellness programs or screenings in congregation spaces
- + Offer hospitality, parking and educational resources to clergy and volunteers
- + Help train clergy and lay volunteers in visiting patients
- + Convene area faith community nurses and volunteers for education and networking
- + Help support faith community nurse programs financially or with other resources such as grant writing
- + Offer rotation for seminarians in hospitals and long term care facilities

### JOINT HEALTH CARE AND FAITH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- + Teach parish volunteers how to identify health problems of fellow congregants and refer them to community services
- + Train volunteers to help members of their faith community navigate the health system
- + Convene health care chaplains and clergy to discuss how they might work together
- + Arrange for parish clergy, faith community nurses or volunteers to visit residents
- + Develop training program or other support for family caregivers

## GETTING STARTED

- + Identify needs
- + Start a conversation
- + Find champions and partners
- + Acknowledge the skills partners bring
- + Start small
- + Seek funding opportunities



Find the booklet and the video at  
[CHAUSA.org/FaithCommunityPartnerships](https://CHAUSA.org/FaithCommunityPartnerships)