

Credentialing of Pastoral Carers – notice to BUV Churches October 2016

Our BUV is a member of “Spiritual Health Victoria” – previously Healthcare Chaplaincy Council of Victoria – which supports pastoral care workers/chaplains in Victorian Hospitals and Health Care Services.

Recently Spiritual Health Victoria has renewed their credentialling requirements for pastoral carers and chaplains in hospitals and health care services. The new requirements express an understandable need for those who enter our hospitals and health care services as pastoral visitors (both paid and voluntary) to have the competence and experience to be able to provide high standards of pastoral care

Most Baptist voluntary hospital visitors and chaplains – both pastors and church members – are not appointed through the BUV office but are appointed at local church level usually through arrangements with the Pastoral Care Coordinator of the Hospital or Health Care Service. This may include:

- A Baptist Pastor who is on a Hospital’s list of visiting clergy, who may be contacted by the Hospital to visit Baptist patients; OR
- A Baptist Pastor or member who is an official voluntary pastoral carer or visitor in a Hospital or Health Care Service.

Attention to credentialling requirements is required in both of these cases.

(Note – this does not include a Pastor or Church Member visiting a member of their own church or faith community while in hospital.)

The primary responsibility to ensure credentialling of voluntary pastoral carers lies with the Hospital or Health Care Service.

However, Spiritual Health Victoria believes that it’s important that the BUV advise its churches of these new credentialling requirements because the churches will need to support the credentialing applications of individuals.

To this end, I’m attaching a copy of a summary I have prepared of the credentialing framework.

If none of the members or Pastor of your church is a voluntary Pastoral Carer or visitor in a Hospital or Health Care Service, you do not need to take any action.

If your Pastor and/or Church Member(s) are voluntary Pastoral Carers or Visitors at a Hospital or Health Care Service, you will need to be familiar with and act on the credentialing framework below.

Summary of “Spiritual Care Providers Credentialing Framework”

for Victorian Baptist Churches

Spiritual Health Victoria has provided a Credentialing Framework Document, for the purposes of helping church denominations meet the new standards to ensure that people appointed by churches – both paid and voluntary – have adequate qualifications, experience and competence to provide safe, high quality pastoral/spiritual care in a healthcare environment. Comprehensive templates are available in the “Spiritual Care Providers Credentialing Framework” on their website [here](#).

A summary of key things you need to know is:

- Credentialing ‘refers to the formal process used to verify qualifications, experience, professional standing and other professional attributes for the purpose of forming a view about their competence, performance and professional suitability to provide safe, high-quality healthcare services within specific organisational environments.’ (Page 9)
- Where a Baptist Church/faith community does have a pastor or member who is appointed to provide pastoral/spiritual care within a hospital or healthcare centre, it would be helpful for the church to designate a person who is responsible for the credentialing process. (Page 11)
- Credentialing includes the following core components:
 - Minimum levels of education and training required for the position
 - Minimum level of experience required for the position
 - Names and contacts of a minimum of two referees
 - Police Check and current Working with Children card
 - Adherence to the Professional Standards of the Faith Community
 - Ongoing requirements for supervision
 - Ongoing requirements for professional development
 - Process for annual performance reviews
 - Evidence of professional indemnity insurance cover
 - Process for appointment to health services
 - Process for re-credentialing
 - Process for responding to concerns and complaints (Pages 11-12)
- “Scope of Practice” should also be outlined through a clearly stated position description (Page 12)

Copies of the framework and further information can also be sought from the officers of Spiritual Health Victoria; their CEO, Cheryl Holmes can be contacted at ceo@spiritualhealthvicgtoria.org.au or phone (03) 8415 1144.