

Eldercare 2013 Annual Report

2013 has been a very busy year for Eldercare. I am finding more and more of my time is spent with organizations that understand the concept of the spirituality of aging and the need for have a faith voice at the table. My work with palliative care and end of life issues has gained momentum in the past year.

I have been working with the End of Life Task force to bring MOLST (medical orders for life sustaining treatment) into existence in RI. We were able to get the law passed in 2012 but it was finally approved by the Department of Health in September of 2013. The next step will be the education piece.

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse is trying to bring CTAC (coalition to transform advanced care) to RI. I have been working with Rev. Dr. Donald Anderson in my role as vice president of the Council of Churches to assist in this effort.

I have been a member of the steering committee for Health Centric Advisors to fulfill a grant to bring Palliative Care into nursing homes. Also, I am a member of the Palliative Care work group through the Partnership to reduce cancer. But the greatest honor was be appointed to the State Palliative Care Advisory Board. This is a nine member board that was made a law in June of 2013 to educate the medical profession and the public as to what palliative care means and it's implication for chronic illness and end of life.

The other two major issues that eldercare works on are Caregivers and Spiritual care to nursing homes. I am a member of the Caregiver Alliance which held its first Award Reception in November at the State House. What a thrill is was for me to reconnect with a special needs student I had from my teaching days. She is all grown up and had nominated her caregiver.

One of the frustrations of trying to bring Spiritual care to nursing homes is that tight budgets necessitate nursing homes to rely on volunteers for worship services for residents. Eldercare is in the process of developing a program to make contact with Protestant churches in the vicinity of a nursing home and train church members to be visitors and to conduct interdenominational services.

Our ABCORI family is one of the joys of working in Eldercare. I have visited many churches and brought greetings and I have done workshops in several churches often bringing goodies from the ABCORI kitchen. Eldercare hosted a Valentine luncheon and helped our John Clarke residents to attend the Thanksgiving Feast. And the retired pastors Christmas party and the Christmas reception at John Clarke Residence are always a highlight of the year.

God has truly blessed the Eldercare Ministry of ABCORI. We have a unique ministry in this state and are blessed with the Baptist Home Board's grant to continue.