



A note from our CEO **Dr. Susan Ehrlich**



October 7, 2024

Sojourn Chaplaincy Celebrates Generations of Compassion

Spiritual Care Week is later this month (Oct 25-31), and to commemorate the occasion I'd like to highlight the significant role Sojourn Chaplaincy plays in the whole person care we provide. For many of our patients, faith and spirituality are a critical part of their health care decisions and healing. Our Multi-Faith Spiritual Care department helps to ensure that we provide culturally responsive care.

At ZSFG, Sojourn Chaplaincy has been our multi-faith spiritual care provider for 42 years, starting in the early 1980s, at the beginning of HIV/AIDS when we had many young men becoming very sick and tragically dying at SFGH. Due to homophobia and fear, local clergy refused to offer care to our patients. Early in the crisis, Sojourn stepped in to fill this gap and care for people with this devastating disease. Today, Sojourn continues its vital work, training hospital clergy and providing spiritual care to all patients who request it at ZSFG. Sojourn is also known nationally in the chaplaincy world as a leader in efforts to educate chaplains in providing gender affirming spiritual care.

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To support patients in need, Sojourn provides chaplains from a diversity of faiths, cultures, and languages who have all completed a 72-unit master's degree and clinical residency. This is often in addition to training that they have had as clergy in their own spiritual traditions.

Chaplains aren't just there at the end of life; they support patients feeling isolated or struggling with illness. This social and emotional support can be a fundamental part of the healing process for our patients who may be separated from family by borders, incarceration, social challenges, and systemic oppression.

In addition to patient care, Sojourn Chaplaincy offers invaluable support to our staff. Chaplains help us process the secondary trauma we experience working in a Level 1 trauma center. Through services like Code Lavender, Sojourn provides peer support and mental health resources, helping us debrief after critical incidents or offering one-on-one counseling—whether personal or professional.

As a non-profit organization, Sojourn Chaplaincy relies on community support to continue its work. On October 16th, they are hosting a fundraising event, *Generations of Compassion*. If you are interested, [tickets can be purchased online](#). It's a chance to celebrate Sojourn's incredible legacy.

At the event, Sojourn will honor Chaplain Carl McGruder, who has served as a chaplain for over a decade and is currently recovering from a severe motorcycle accident. Many of you know him and will be as glad as I am to hear of his continued recovery.

Sojourn Chaplaincy is a cherished part of our hospital community, and they are here for you. Please don't hesitate to reach out (***69868** or **page 415-327-1187**) or ask your manager to call for a Code Lavender if you and your colleagues ever need support.

Wishing you all a wonderful week!

Susan



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