

COVENANT AND CODE OF ETHICS FOR VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) CHAPLAINS

Having accepted God's call to minister to individuals and families within the Department of Veterans Affairs medical system, I covenant with God and these people with God's help; to deepen my obedience to the commandments, to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics of the VA Chaplaincy and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.

I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of my religious body.

I will carefully adhere to whatever direction may be conveyed to me by my endorsing body for maintenance of my endorsement.

I understand as a chaplain in the VA Chaplaincy that I must function in a pluralistic environment with chaplains of other religious bodies to provide for ministry to all VA patients, staff and their families entrusted to my care.

I will seek to provide for pastoral care and ministry to persons of religious bodies other than my own within my area of responsibility with the same investment of myself that I give to members of my own religious body. I will work collegially with chaplains and community ministers of religious bodies other than my own as together we seek to provide a comprehensive pastoral care program for all those persons entrusted to us. I will respect the beliefs and traditions of my colleagues and those to whom I minister. When conducting services of public worship that include persons of other than my religious body, I will draw upon those beliefs, principles and practices that we have in common.

I will, if in a supervisory position, respect the practices and beliefs of all chaplains I supervise and exercise care not to require of them any service that would be in violation of the practices and beliefs of their particular religious body.

I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both within the staff and with colleagues throughout the VA medical system.

I affirm the practice of a disciplined spiritual life as the foundation upon which ministry is built. I further affirm open and caring human relationships, ongoing professional and personal growth, regularly scheduled recreation, and participation in a support group as critical to both my wellbeing as a person and my effectiveness as a clergy person.

I recognize that my obligation is to provide a comprehensive pastoral care program to all members of the VA medical system, their families and other authorized personnel. I will accept outside responsibility only when it does not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my primary Veterans Affairs duties.

I will defend my colleagues against discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion or national origin.

I will hold in confidence all privileged communication received during the conduct of my ministry.

I will not use my position of special trust to proselytize. I will respond to any inquirer's request for spiritual guidance or pastoral care.

I will show personal love for God in my life and ministry as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the profession to which I have been called.

I recognize the special power afforded me by my ministerial office. I will never use that power in ways that violate the personhood of another human being.

I will adhere to the standards of ethical conduct as contained in applicable regulations governing employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

NAME: PRINTED OR TYPED: _____

NB: Please sign and return with Application.