

QUIET HEALING ON THE FRONT LINES

*Chaplains offer consolation,
comfort and support*

BY JANET REESE

Mike Hansen, health care chaplain at Parker Adventist Hospital, introduces himself with a friendly greeting, “Hi there, my name’s Mike and I’m one of the chaplains out visiting patients today.”

During the conversation, patients sometimes ask him where his church is. “The hospital is my church,” says Hansen. “I work here full-time.” As faith-based organizations, Centura Health and the South Denver Hospital Group (Littleton, Parker and Porter Adventist Hospitals), acknowledge the benefits of spirituality for people’s mental, physical and emotional health. As a result, chaplains serve as integral members of the health care team, providing comfort, encouragement and counsel to patients and staff regardless of their backgrounds or beliefs.

The hospitals are staffed with a team of chaplains who make daily patient visits. Chaplains are on call 24/7 for emergency assistance to patients and their families. A chapel in each hospital offers a quiet, reflective place to meditate, pray or worship.

Mike Hansen, health care chaplain at Parker Adventist Hospital



CALL

Lean On Us

To contact pastoral care, call Littleton Adventist Hospital at **303-730-5884**; Parker Adventist Hospital at **303-269-4961** or Porter Adventist Hospital at **303-765-3517**.

Steve Gomes, chaplain at Littleton Adventist, says, “Chaplains work with people in a nondenominational fashion and with all faiths and philosophies. We meet people wherever they are. They lead us to their need.”

SHELTER FROM THE STORM

“We often meet people at their worst time of life and they are understandably apprehensive about what lies ahead,” says Sam Miller, chaplain at Porter Adventist Hospital. “Some may feel grief, despair, anxiety and fear. Our chaplains have been specially trained in spiritual care and provide them compassionate emotional support, spiritual strength and consolation.

“Patients never forget how you make them feel,” Miller continues. “You provide calmness in the middle of a storm.”

“Because of our training, chaplains are able to help with patients’ pain without being uncomfortable themselves,” says Hansen. “We engage in active listening, asking open-ended questions that allow the conversation to go in different directions. We listen for words that may indicate where we can help them.”

Education and training for chaplains requires a Master of Divinity degree and an additional year of clinical pastoral education. Littleton Adventist Hospital hosts a clinical pastoral education program. Gomes directs the program where he works with chaplains, seminary students, laypersons, volunteers and others preparing for ministry within health care.

A chaplain can support you in the hospital in many ways—whether you have spiritual questions you would like to explore, would like someone to pray with, want to be connected with someone from your denomination, want to find supportive resources in the hospital or your community, or simply have an ethical question and would like a safe person to talk to. 