

THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ATHENS

B' GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF PASTORAL CARE FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION



Directorate of Hospital Pastoral Care
VOLUNTARY MINISTRY OF HOSPITAL PATIENTS

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INFORMATIVE BROCHURE

The Voluntary Ministry of Hospital Patients (EDANI), as part of the greater pastoral care provided by the Greek Orthodox Church to our sick brothers, operates in the Hospitals of Attica, offering primary care to lonely – abandoned patients (adults and children) during their hospitalisation.

As of March 2014, the programme “Ministry at home” was introduced while a “Hospitality at home” pilot programme has recently started to operate informally, offering hospitality to patients’ relatives.

The activity of E.D.A.N.I. is organised and coordinated by four social workers and a sociologist who utilise the volunteer services offered by 460 volunteers, with the greatest possible safety for

- patients,
- health institutions,
- the volunteers themselves &
- their families.

E.D.A.N.I. ACTIONS

1. In Hospitals

A. Individual Ministries for the care of lonely patients

Volunteers provide primary care to lonely patients (children and adults). Through their three-hour presence by the side of patients they endeavour to make up for the absence of relatives and friends and support them as such. During the day three different volunteers alternate to serve patients with three different shifts, from 11:00 a.m. to 20:00 p.m. (9 hours per day in total).

B. Hospital Volunteer Groups

Hospital volunteer groups visit hospital patients once a week offering them consolation, support and a touch of humanity, bringing the Greek Orthodox Church closer to patients and conveying Jesus Christ’s love to

them. Volunteers approach patients with a keen sense of responsibility and a lot of discretion.

C. Accompanying Patients

Volunteers accompany lonely patients from hospitals to their home, to clinics, institutions or wherever is necessary. They accompany patients either in a hospital ambulance or in a private clinic ambulance following relevant consultation with the Administration of the hospital.

D. Red tape Procedures

Volunteers also help lonely patients with various bureaucratic procedural issues. They see to the issuance of a new health booklet, receive medical test results or transfer samples to any diagnostic centre.

E. Keeping children creatively occupied and entertained

At regular intervals, EDANI volunteers organize shows with the help of a clown and his assistants in order to entertain children, keep them pleasant company and make children's stay in the hospital more agreeable.

2. Care “at home”

As of May 2014, the programme “ministry at home” was introduced with an aim to providing primary care and company to lonely people who are either deprived of family and relatives or their family is unable to offer them daily support and company.

3. “Hospitality at home”

As of April 2015, EDANI in an effort to broaden its services to hospitalised patients and their families, has started to cooperate with and supervise volunteers who for a number of years have been informally offering hospitality to hospitalised patients' relatives.

Become a Volunteer

Who can become a volunteer?

We believe that anyone who can and knows how “*to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep*” (Romans 12:15) is suitable to try to become a volunteer.

EDANI Volunteers

EDANI volunteers are sensitized fellow-human beings who offer some of their spare time to stand by needy lonely patients. They are not

committed to following a specific regular and scheduled volunteer offer. Their action-offer is ad hoc organized, according to their personal programme and is based on the distinct abilities of each volunteer.

1. What do ministry volunteers offer?

- Whatever anyone of us would expect in times of suffering...
- Whatever a lonely abandoned patient would need...
- What anyone of us would offer to a hospitalised relative of them...

2. How to enter EDANI- first contact

Those who are interested in becoming EDANI volunteers, are invited to an interview with a Social Worker during which they have a friendly discussion, are informed on how EDANI operates, the prerequisites they have to meet in order to become volunteers, their obligations as well as the way in which they will cooperate and communicate with our Service regarding their ministries. They can also complete, if they wish, the volunteer application form and the entry agreement.

A key prerequisite candidate volunteers have to fulfill in order to enter EDANI and offer their services, is their participation in the special introductory training programmes.

Volunteers Training

EDANI's primary concern is to ensure that its volunteers are well aware of the particularities of the Hospitals and wards they visit, that they are duly sensitised and face their mission in a most responsible and cautious manner in these health areas. To this end, three phases of training are organised in each training year, including programmes of special presentations, the attendance of which is mandatory for all new volunteers.

1. Theoretical training

Volunteers' theoretical training is performed under the aegis and with the support of the Pastoral Training Institution of the Archdiocese of Athens. The programme and the subjects of the presentations are drawn up on the basis of volunteers' needs and are carried out by scientists who voluntarily offer their services (social workers, psychologists, hospital priests, nurses etc.). Volunteers are obliged, before starting their visits to hospitals, to attend at least 10 different presentations.

The objectives of theoretical training are to:

Offer volunteers valuable information on health areas so as to ensure that they will be able to conduct their ministries with safety both for the hospital and the patients as well as for the volunteers themselves and their families.

Sensitise volunteers in terms of patients' emotional and health particularities (e.g. individuals with disabilities, cancer patients etc).

Familiarise volunteers with certain basic practices of discrete approach to patients and assist them in improving their listening and communication skills when dealing with patients.

Inform volunteers on the operation, organization and actions of EDANI.

Help volunteers to gain a deeper insight in their role as volunteers and become acquainted with the rules of the Service.

2. Practical training

Practical training is conducted under the responsibility and supervision of the Social Workers of EDANI. Volunteers participate in practical training once they have completed their theoretical training. Each new volunteer performs at least 3 to 4 co-ministries aided by an older volunteer "trainer".

Practical training seeks to assist new volunteers to:

Become acquainted with the ways in which they are to circulate and take action in hospitals and wards.

Practically implement the knowledge they have acquired in theoretical training, making the most of the older volunteers' experience.

Ascertain whether they are able to meet the demands and cope with the emotional tension involved in voluntary offer-ministry in health areas.

Get to know the patients they will later serve on their own and familiarise themselves with their individual needs and particularities.

A primary commitment and intent of EDANI is to ensure that its volunteers receive constant and consistent training, support and supervision by its specialized social workers thus enabling their best evaluation and utilisation.

3 Volunteers Support Programmes

The volunteers support groups are made up of about 10 to 15 persons. They meet once a month under the supervision of the Chaplain in Charge and under the responsibility of the Social Workers of the Voluntary Ministry of Hospital Patients. All volunteers engaged in ministries participate in the volunteer support groups.

Encouraging and relieving volunteers

It is sometimes the case that volunteers experience emotional stress and fatigue during their ministries. In the support groups they have the opportunity to share their experiences and the occasional practical difficulties they are faced with in certain instances with other volunteers participating in the group. During the support session they develop the ways in which they deal with those difficulties, exchange views through group discussion, assess the various issues and seek alternative or more effective ways of handling them. Role playing is also included in these meetings, through which volunteers receive major help in learning how to manage their feelings, understand their role and their relationship with EDANI, the hospital and the patient.

Getting acquainted and communicating

Support groups aim at bringing volunteers closer together and encouraging them to get to know each other better, making them feel they belong to a group by sharing common goals, visions and prospects.

Support Volunteers

As of spring 2011 and in view of the general financial difficulties, a body of support volunteers was set up. It consists of volunteers who are unable to meet the demands involved in personal voluntary presence by the side of lonely patients and who have undertaken to financially support (each one according to their capabilities) the operation of EDANI through a monthly contribution. Their help is substantial and invaluable.

Bank accounts

The Voluntary Ministry of Hospital Patients is a self-financed activity of the Greek Orthodox Church and is supported by the **Association of Voluntary Ministry of Hospital Patients**, which was founded by volunteers with the exclusive aim of reliably and lawfully managing and making the most effective use of donations for the operating needs of EDANI.

The bank accounts kept by the EDANI Association for its financial support are the following:

Bank of Piraeus: GR73 0172 0520 0050 5203 2910 228

Eurobank: GR71 0260 0320 0008 3020 0492 822

