

rehabilitation from illness. (4) Integrative medicine also acknowledges that most medical interventions are intended to enhance the potential for self-healing, a God-given gift. For example, the surgeon closes a wound but the body must heal it.

Integrative medicine is about wholeness. This societal trend, when combined with Jewish teaching, enables us to envision a model of care

where the healing of the body and the healing of the soul unite to bring wholeness, a *refuah shleimah*.

Dr. David Eisenberg is Bernard Osher Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School Director – Harvard Medical School Osher Institute. Rabbi Elaine Zecher is a rabbi at Temple Israel in Boston. They met on Parashat Chayyei Sarah and have three children.

Innovative Models

Congregational Nursing

Jaclyn Herzlinger

Health is more than the mere absence of disease. Because health is the integration of body, mind, and soul, today's Jewish community must teach and support positive health attitudes, practices, and a new vision of how to deploy health care personnel. New ways of integrating health and health care into community are being considered. Our synagogues need to be part of this new vision. Why not make synagogues — already spiritual places of education, worship, and fellowship — places of community support, health education, healing prayer, and medical support?

Thousands of nurses already work in churches as parish nurses. These nurses are trained in methods that productively fuse faith and modern medicine. Jewish congregational nurses can similarly empower our own communities to incorporate health practices and spiritual thinking into the daily lives of Jews. Some Jewish congregational nurses are already working in synagogues. They promote health through education, personal guidance, and referral. They screen blood pressure, keep long-term records, and advise congregants about which medication side effects are not harmful and which to report to personal physicians immediately.

The roles congregational nurses play can vary. One nurse received a call from a friend of a congregant. Her friend's son was just home from a stay in the hospital where he was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes. Her friend was sitting in a chair pale and shaking — fearful about administering in-

sulin injections. The nurse went to the home, listened, and offered to come to the home each morning at seven to be sure that there were no problems. The next morning and several mornings thereafter the congregational nurse reassured the mother that each step was correct. In a few days the family was independent and confident. The nurse was no longer needed. The fact that the synagogue provided this service may never be forgotten.

A fire in the home of a congregant family burned the house to the ground. A church community next door provided shelter, food, clothing, transportation, and school books until the family could pull itself together. The local rabbi was appalled that his synagogue did not have a system to provide support in emergencies. A caring committee — staffed by a congregational nurse — was born.

The presence of professional nurses *working in* our congregations can provide a missing link between the synagogue and the community, and between health and wholeness, a link that will once again bind God, the individual, and the community together in a covenant of health.

Jaclyn Herzlinger, R.N., directs a Congregational Nurse program in Springfield, N.J., for three synagogues. She has a degree in English and history from Smith College and nursing credentials from Rutgers University. She is an oncology nurse and has been a hospice professional for the past fifteen years.