

## Regional Meeting Planning Guidelines

Regional Meetings are a key component in membership recruitment and member interest in Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF). This document gives some guidelines and aids in doing this planning.

- I. Purpose of Gatherings: Since MHF is an international fellowship of healthcare professionals, much of its work is carried out via mail, phone, and electronic communications. However, in areas where there are clusters of members, we want to encourage periodic gatherings.
- II. Goals:
  - A. Provide a face to face setting where members from all healthcare professions can learn to know each other personally and develop relationships for fellowship and networking.
  - B. Provide resources of encouragement and support to each other through speakers, discussion forums, etc.
  - C. Build interest and enthusiasm among current MHF members for the Annual Gatherings.
  - D. Recruit additional healthcare professionals in the area.
  - E. Meet and encourage students interested in healthcare professions and acquaint them with and invite them to join MHF.
  - F. Support and find ways to connect students in healthcare studies programs with healthcare professionals in their area of interest.
- III. Possible settings
  - A. Smaller groups might meet in a member home for a carry-in meal or snacks/dessert.
  - B. Most groups will probably want to reserve a church fellowship room or sanctuary, depending on whether food is served.
  - C. In some areas there might be a workplace or Mennonite institutional setting that would be appropriate.
  - D. A park or picnic area might be appropriate during warmer months of the year.
  - E. Special considerations:
    1. Where a carry-in is planned, be sensitive to people's abilities to bring in food.
    2. Where a potentially large group of students is to be invited (particularly undergraduates at church-related colleges), an after-dinner meeting with refreshments on the college or university campus may work best.
- IV. Determine a date, time, and location that will work well for healthcare professionals in your area. Obviously, you won't be able to accommodate everyone, but strive to include as many potential members as possible.
  - A. Make sure you are not conflicting with significant events at area churches, church schools, or with events related to public school arts or athletics.
  - B. Consider all possibilities: Weekday evening, Saturday or Sunday afternoon or evening, perhaps even a breakfast meeting.

- C. Secure the use of a convenient accessible location at low or no cost with adequate space for both meeting and parking.
- V. Plan for the program and accompanying activities
- A. Decide on a moderator – It is suggested that one of the Regional Coordinators ordinarily moderate the program.
  - B. Find a speaker. In most cases, an interesting speaker will help draw prospective members to the meeting. In some smaller settings, members may want to simply share with each other about their work and service activities.
  - C. Plan for any food, whether refreshments or a meal.
  - D. Plan for some kind of table display with membership materials.
- VI. Publicity
- A. Discern what combination of media will reach most people most efficiently: email, postal mail, or even a telephone chain.
  - B. MHF office can provide help in contacting current MHF members as well as those who were on lists provided by Mennonite Medical Association and Mennonite Nurses Association at the time of MHF's formation.
  - C. Contact Mennonite and related church offices to place bulletin or newsletter announcements and/or place flyers on bulletin boards.
  - D. In some areas, conference offices may be able to help get announcements to churches.
  - E. Don't forget some of the smaller Anabaptist groups that may have interested healthcare professionals.
  - F. In some areas, local newspapers will run free announcements.
  - G. If you are inviting a well-known speaker on a topic of general community interest, consider inviting the community as a whole and put out a press release to local media to that effect.
- VII. Resources available from MHF Office
- A. An honorarium budget of \$100 is available to offer outside speakers.
  - B. Money for food, room rental, and other expenses is also available in the MHF budget.
  - C. Books for drawings are usually available, along with sign-up forms. Forms also serve to get contact information from members and prospective members.
  - D. One of two banner stands may be available. Typically, one is stored in the Goshen office and one is kept in a location farther east. Check with the MHF office.
  - E. Full-sheet multiple line sign-up form for quick sign-in
  - F. Name tags and markers
  - G. MHF brochures, pens, additional promotional materials, e.g. flyers for Annual Gathering.
  - H. Prospective member folders
  - I. **Planning sheet attached.**

For more information, contact the MHF Office

**Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship**

PO Box 918

Goshen, IN 46527-0918

Phone: 1-888-406-3643

Email: [info@mennohealth.org](mailto:info@mennohealth.org)

Web: [www.mennohealth.org](http://www.mennohealth.org)

## MHF Regional Meeting Planning Sheet

Specific Goals:

Date and Time:

- Who will check on potential conflicts:

Place:

- Who will contact:
- Who will take care of physical arrangements:

Food:

- What will be served:
  
- Who is in charge of arrangements:
  
- Who will coordinate:

Program:

- Who will contact:

Publicity:

- Who will contact MHF Office:
- Who will coordinate...
  - Mailing:
  - Emails:
  - Phone calls
- Who will contact...
  - Church offices
  - Conference offices
  - Other groups
  - Media

Other details and notes: