

To: Judy VandeWater

From: Mike Slubowski

RE: Sr. Carol's style as a leader and her accomplishments at CHA

Date: March 20, 2019

Let me start by saying that my first "real" job in Catholic health ministry was when I was chief operating officer at Providence Hospital in Southfield, Michigan. We were part of the Daughters of Charity National Health System, or DCNHS (now Ascension Health) East Central Division, which also included Providence Hospital in Washington, D.C. when Sister Carol was CEO. I met her as part of that regional and national experience and was immediately impressed with what I heard and saw regarding her leadership – her steadfast commitment to mission, her passion for excellence in person-centered care, her love for those who are poor and underserved, and her support for what DCNHS was doing on a national basis to advance Catholic health ministry. It was no surprise for me to learn years later that she had assumed the role of president and CEO of CHA.

In my early days as part of Trinity Health, Sister Carol visited us and consistently presented a profoundly positive image of what Catholic health care was doing to support those who are vulnerable, to advocate for health care as a basic right for all, and to affirm the work we were doing as a national ministry.

I served for a few years on the governance committee of CHA during the early to mid-2000's, and also observed Sister Carol as a leader in honoring the work of the committee but also actively supporting the recruitment of a balanced board for CHA that represented the ministry in a comprehensive way – ministries that were geographically dispersed, ministries that were part of systems and those who were freestanding, and representing various roles and competencies needed for the board (e.g., mission, governance, sponsors, executives, clinicians, etc.) I was impressed with her comprehensive knowledge of, and deep relationships with, people from across Catholic health care.

When I served as president/CEO of SCL Health, we invited Sister Carol to speak to our leadership team and our governance – and she always accepted the invitation without hesitation. Regardless of how full her schedule was, she would always make time to be present and to share where the health ministry was and where it was going, and what we were doing to lead the way with advocacy for the Affordable Care Act. She is an engaging speaker, and our leadership, governance and sponsors all gave high marks to Carol's presence, presentations, and engagement with our teams.

While serving at SCL Health, I was humbled to be invited to join the CHA Board, and it has been an amazing experience to develop deep relationships with many amazing leaders and to see the Catholic health ministry from a national perspective -- as well as observing Sister Carol's impact on the transformation of CHA and impact on Catholic health care. Some things that I have observed (not an exhaustive list):

- The CHA board and its committees are very well organized and staffed. It is clear that Sister Carol has had a profound impact on shaping the role of governance and supporting it to become a high-functioning team. Orientation of new members is comprehensive, and the assignment of mentors in the first year is indicative of the processes that Sister Carol and her team have put in place to create great governance.

- CHA has high-functioning, capable staff who are tightly aligned with the mission and who adore Sister Carol. And she has been superb with succession planning, as evidenced by the outstanding leaders she has recruited in the past year to succeed retiring team members.
- Sister Carol represents the kind of "Level 5" leader that Jim Collins describes in his book *Good to Great*. A Level 5 leader "builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will." That is a perfect description of Sister Carol.
- Sister Carol is extroverted and is a natural at building relationships, from government leaders to staff to board members to health system leaders to church leaders. She is very comfortable with groups and individuals and develops personal bonds besides professional relationships.
- Sister Carol is very responsive to the CHA board as well as the ministries across the country and the ideas they present to support the ministry as a whole. Follow up from board meetings is complete and comprehensive. Updates on the strategic plan progress are produced on a regular basis. Sister Carol alerts the board to important events or issues. She produces a CEO report that covers important topics and her important travels and meeting participation.
- CHA staff have advanced numerous initiatives based on input from the board and from the membership at large. CHA's affinity groups are valued and well attended. The work that Carol and team have done to develop sponsor formation, leadership formation, Project Legacy, the program in Catholic Clinical Ethics with Georgetown and the Ministry Identity Assessment tool are recent examples of advancements that demonstrate value to all members of CHA.
- I am painfully aware of the personal sacrifice and slings and arrows that Sister Carol had to endure as she worked tirelessly on the passage of the Affordable Care Act. I met with a conservative bishop during that time who made accusations regarding Sister Carol's integrity that were completely unfounded, and I challenged him! But despite the challenges that Sister Carol endured, she has developed marvelous relationships with many bishops and members of the Roman Curia. I observed this during the CHA board's executive committee visit to Rome last year, in which she was warmly received by several cardinals and bishops and all acknowledged the excellent working relationship that she has with them. Sister Carol's love for church and its broader meaning – all of us are church – is deep and profound, and her desire to remain in communion with church hierarchy despite challenges is clear and genuine. She seeks to find ways for us to be pastoral and to advance public policy, public and community health, especially services for women and children, while recognizing and working through some of the rigidity of some church doctrine, especially regarding women's health issues.
- Sister Carol knows her way around Rome! The day of our executive committee meetings with various dicastery leaders last year was at the same time that the pope was holding one of his general audiences. We were having difficulty getting to one of the buildings, and Sister Carol was able to talk her way through armed guards and the Swiss guards to get us to our meetings! Who else would have that swag with Vatican security? Needless to say, I was impressed!
- Sister Carol is a supreme example of the "Energizer Bunny." I have never observed anyone who works as hard and as tirelessly as she does. The Catholic health ministry is truly her vocation, and she is "on" 24/7/365, always willing to lend a helping hand or to advance a cause. I am sure

that she is lifetime platinum on several airlines given her punishing travel schedule. People see how genuine she is through her words and her deeds. She is also a continuous learner.

- Working with Sister Carol, previously as a committee chair and now as chair of CHA has been a blessing. She is always supportive of us, and always uses the executive committee as a sounding board for challenging issues. I have done my best to be a "low maintenance" chair given all of the spinning plates that Carol and CHA have been addressing, but whenever I need her or the staff, they are there to support. And she and the staff make it easy to serve as chair! Agendas and materials are prepared in advance, are very thoughtful and responsive to board work, and always reflect back to the CHA strategic plan pillars of advocacy, church relationships and Catholic identity, and member engagement.
- In chairing the search process for Sister Carol's successor, I've realized from day one that we will not be able to find the "complete package" that she represents. She is a religious woman, a nurse/clinician/caregiver, a healthcare CEO, an advocacy expert, a mission leader, a church hierarchy relations expert and an association president! We will be blessed to find the next leader who has, at most, two or three of these attributes. It just further demonstrates why she has been so effective at moving our ministry to the next level.

In summary, Sister Carol exemplifies the words, "Caring Spirit." It is in her DNA. It isn't hard to spot it almost immediately whenever anyone engages with her.

It has been an honor and blessing to know and work with Sister Carol. I have grown more deeply in my faith and my commitment and resolve as a Catholic health care leader as a result of observing Sister Carol's unrelenting and unflappable commitment to ministry and to advancing the human condition for all people, regardless of means, race, religion or creed – in body, mind and spirit. I believe she has made me a better person, as well as countless colleagues who are joined together in ministry for those we serve.

I wanted to end these observations with a quote from Pope Francis. He said:

"The world tells us to seek success, power and money; God tells us to seek humility, service and love."

There couldn't be a better quote to describe my feelings toward Sister Carol Keehan and what she stands for.

Peace to you,

Mike Slubowski
President and Chief Operating Officer
Trinity Health

2018/19 CHA Board Chair