



Competing Values

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EDITOR

As surely as management gurus will continue to warn that the only constant is change, no one working in America will escape today's recasting of work life, which experts compare to the Industrial Revolution. At some time, in some way, all of us will experience this revolution, in the form of altered relationships between employers and employees, cultural diversity, and layoffs.

Each of these workplace realities raises perplexing questions for both managers and staff, because they require us to struggle with values that at times seem incompatible—for example, the good of the individual and the good of society, stewardship of financial resources and stewardship of human resources, open communication and confidentiality. Three articles in the special section tackle workplace issues:

- Responding to concerns of Catholic Health Association members about how to treat employees fairly in these times of change and uncertain employment, CHA's Center for Leadership Excellence convened representatives from human resources, mission, and administration. On p. 18, Ed Giganti reports the results: a process to guide healthcare organizations in creating a new "social contract" with employees.

- In *Health Progress's* December 1994 issue on diversity, Portia L. Hunt made the point that leaders who want to fortify alliances with the community and with their employees must create strategic plans that integrate diversity in corporate goals. The Franciscan Health System of Cincinnati made such a commitment three years ago. On p. 23, Carole Cornelison describes the system's progress toward a culturally diverse workplace that gives FHSC a competitive edge and, more important, fulfills its mission.



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- In 1994 Saint Joseph Hospital and Health Care Centers, Memphis, faced the need to carry out a large layoff. John D. Rudnick, Jr., describes the facility's efforts to complete the work force reduction in a manner that respected employees' dignity (p. 26).

Realizing his article raises controversial issues, Rudnick invites readers to contact him or write letters to the editor to share their reactions and experiences.

CHALLENGES OF A "FAILING" SYSTEM

Employment issues represent only one set of difficult questions demanding a rigorous examination of competing values. On p. 30, Rev. Dennis Brodeur adds to the list patient-physician relationships, the limits of personal choice, the financing of healthcare, and rationing of care. Don't miss his prescription for restructuring a system he believes is failing on all levels.

DIRECTIVES ON REPRODUCTION

Part 4 of the revised *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* helps care givers analyze competing values involving abortion, contraception, and assisted reproduction. But applying the directives in concrete situations is rarely simple. On p. 36, Sr. Jean deBlois, CSJ, and Rev. Kevin D. O'Rourke, OP, tell how care givers can obtain a richer understanding of the issues as they make difficult choices.

SPEAK OUT

How have you resolved problems involving competing values? To comment on subjects raised in *Health Progress*, please write to me, fax a response (314-427-0029), call me at 314-253-3449, or e-mail me at judy.cassidy@healthonline.com (or at CHA's Internet e-mail address—cha@healthonline.com—where you may also contact other CHA staff and obtain information about CHA activities).