



Terry Van Schaik
EDITOR

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Peace and Dignity for the Aged

November is the anniversary of my father's death. He was not a particularly old man—72 years old—when he told my stepmother, "I'm going," and suffered a final, massive heart attack.

In his last year of life, he moved in a seemingly endless cycle from his home, to a hospital, to a nursing home, to his home again. Any dignity he knew that year he found mostly when he and his wife had the energy to create it. He would shave as well as he was able while sitting in a recliner, comb hair he had always been vain about, and put on a clean shirt in preparation for a visitor—maybe me. We'd sit together then, I on the arm of the chair and he aware, I'm sure, of my presence while he drifted between wakefulness and sleep. We shared a peace then that he also rarely found during his last long year.

Where, I've often wondered since his death, is the dignity and peace people like my father, and those older or less ill than he, crave and deserve? This issue of *Health Progress* offers answers to these questions and others related to long-term care in our country.

David Durenberger, Dale Thompson, and Lisa Shulman offer ideas for changing financing and delivery of long-term care so that the country and its citizens can afford high-quality care in settings people prefer. Articles on collaborative efforts between Catholic health care and Catholic Charities USA and the makeover of the Teresian House in Albany include examples of innovative, person-centered long-term care. Brian Forschner and Steve Dawson both write on a key component of quality care—the caregivers themselves.

Larry Minnix shares AAHSA's vision of a better world for the elderly—one we hope this issue contributes to achieving.

THE 2001 HEALTH PROGRESS INDEX

Looking for the 2001 index? You will find it in the January/February 2002 issue of *Health Progress*.

JOURNAL OF THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

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HEALTH PROGRESS®

Reprinted from *Health Progress*, November-December 2001
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