

Some Things Will Never Change



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Notice the line at the top of this issue's cover. It tells you that *Health Progress* marks its 90th anniversary this year. The publication made its debut in May 1920, and — having the bound volume of all the issues for that year in front of me as I write — I find myself informed both by what has changed and what has remained the same.

Obvious differences between then and now include the name of the publication and the organization that published it. In 1920 it was *Hospital Progress*, “the official magazine of the Catholic Hospital Association.” (The organization changed its name to the Catholic Health Association in 1979, and *Hospital Progress* became *Health Progress* five years later.) Today we label *Health Progress* “the official *journal* of the Catholic Health Association,” though around the office we often refer to it as a magazine.

The font of the original nameplate was highly decorative, reminiscent of medieval calligraphy. Inside, though, decoration was absent in that first issue: no photographs, no illustrations, with the notable exception of the numerous medical products and equipment pictured in ads.

That quickly changed. Beginning with the second issue, photographs often accompanied articles, serving to remind us that religious sisters were once identified by elaborate habits and nurses by starched white uniforms and caps.

What hasn't changed from that initial volume is the focus on mission and ethics, the commitment to delivering evidence-based quality in health care (the favored term was “standardization” in those days), and the conviction that health care is a basic human right. That conviction is, in fact, the underlying theme of virtually every article in the current issue, serving as a link back to this publication's birth.

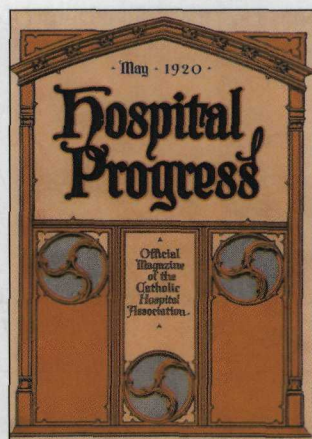
Read what an editor wrote in the unsigned introduction to that first issue:

“Health is life and the well-being of life. It is a gift of God to man and He protects it by a stern commandment, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ Neither omission nor commission is permitted when human life and its well-being are at stake. We are all bound by this obligation; we all, perhaps, need a new consecration to this solemn duty, we are ‘our brothers’ keepers.’”

Amen. It is both comforting and disquieting to note that the opening salvo in 1920 could serve as introduction to the articles on health reform that await your attention in the pages ahead. It's clear that Catholic health care has remained true to its values. It's equally clear that our society has been painfully slow to recognize in law that health care is a basic human right.

You will no doubt find the authors in this issue offer much food for thought, many reminders that we are indeed our brothers' and our sisters' keepers, and much inspiration for action on behalf of health care reform in what we pray will be fruitful days ahead. You will see in their articles numerous references to CHA's document *Our Vision for U.S. Health Care*. It can be found on the home page of our website, www.chausa.org.

The biblical prophet Habakkuk said, “The vision has its time.” Our authors write, The time is now.



The first issue of *Hospital Progress*, published in 1920.