

# Changes at CHA Revitalize Its Mission, Goals, Direction

BY CHARLES E. THOELE

**A**s we continue the *New Covenant* process with the goal of strengthening Catholic healthcare through collaborative strategies, the Catholic Health Association (CHA) not only must be a "facilitator" for its members, but also must look inward to ensure that the association galvanizes the ministry and remains a champion for values-driven healthcare.

To that end, the CHA Board of Trustees has engaged in a six-month process to review and revitalize CHA's mission, goals, and strategic direction. In February the board conducted a three-day planning retreat facilitated by Marian Jennings of Jennings Ryan & Kolb, Hadley, MA. Input from a member survey was used during the retreat to formulate the initial plan.

Subsequently, the CHA joint committee, made up of representatives of the IDN Services, Ministry Services, Sponsor Services, and Center for Leadership Excellence Advisory Committees, met to provide additional input to the board planning process for refocusing CHA's role. The board then finalized the plan at its April meeting, and the full report was mailed to members and presented at the 81st Catholic Health Assembly in June (see pp. 44-45).

## MOVING THE PROCESS FORWARD

The ministry clearly remains rooted in our core values. At the same time, we are committed to serving our priority users—sponsors, CEOs of systems and facilities, boards, and Church leaders—by being a catalyst through:

- Advocacy
- Education
- Facilitation
- Research and development

We have already begun to change by implementing a gradual move away from a pyramidal structure to a network model of staff organization. This



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Unity Health  
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spring, you were informed of the organizational changes and the personnel involved. This summer and fall, the board will be working with the staff in restructuring existing committees and further realigning the board functions. We will continue to seek your input as we move this process forward.

During the annual business meeting of the CHA assembly in San Antonio, I offered those present a deal. I said I would personally read all comments mailed or faxed to CHA concerning our mission, goals, and objectives and make sure the board heard these comments.

I repeat the offer. I encourage you to write and fax your comments and concerns throughout the coming year. Remember the deal: "You write . . . I'll read."

## INSPIRATION FROM THE PAST

Participants at the assembly were moved by the stirring documentary *A Call to Care*, the story of Catholic women religious who have made, and continue to make, a profound contribution to healthcare in the United States. It seemed particularly appropriate to me to hear of their extraordinary ability to do the amazing, at a time when Catholic health ministries of today seem overwhelmed by the issues confronting them. We must not only draw inspiration from our past, but it also seems that we must keep in mind the words of the prophet, "For the vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, it will not disappoint." □

*Send your comments to Mr. Thoele c/o CHA, 4455 Woodson Road, St. Louis, MO 63134-3797; fax 314-427-0029. For a copy of the board's report, Making a Difference: Mission, Goals, and Objectives of a Refounded CHA, call Dottie Freitag at CHA, 314-253-3458.*