

CHA'S VISION STATEMENT: A CLOSER LOOK

This past summer, CHA's Board of Trustees adopted a new vision statement: *We Will Empower Bold Change to Elevate Human Flourishing*. The vision statement will guide the development of CHA's new Fiscal Year 2024-26 strategic plan.



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REARDON**

Headed by a six-person committee from the CHA board, the creation and adoption of the vision statement took more than nine months and included input from hundreds of CHA stakeholders.

During this visioning process, CHA used quantitative and qualitative surveys, conducted one-on-one interviews, convened focus groups with key constituents and dedicated hours of discussions with CHA board members. The result was a nine-word statement that succinctly describes CHA's aspirations and goals for how we are called to serve in the years ahead.

SO WHY CREATE A VISION STATEMENT NOW?

The simple answer could be "because of COVID." But the need for a new vision statement is about more than addressing the lasting implications of the pandemic. The numerous challenges facing health care providers in the U.S. — including severe financial distress and workforce shortages, coupled with more extensive societal disruptions, such as political polarization, environmental degradation and the rapid use of artificial intelligence — require us to do things differently. Our new vision statement is therefore a necessary articulation of a future state for Catholic health care.

WHAT IS THE MEANING BEHIND THE NINE WORDS?

As someone who has spent my career as a communicator, I have a deep appreciation for the power of words. I'm also a firm believer that when

it comes to effectively conveying a message, a concise perspective on language is often the best approach — less is indeed more. And as the process of developing the statement unfolded, it was clear that every word was needed to powerfully express the meaning and intent of our vision.

“We” speaks to the power of CHA members coming together to effect meaningful change. It calls us to align with others of goodwill outside the membership, including our patients, community leaders, government officials and those serving within the Catholic Church.

To gain a deeper understanding of CHA's new vision statement, it's helpful to look at it in three distinct parts: “we”; “empower bold change”; and “elevate human flourishing.”

We

The basic definition of “we” simply describes more than one person. However, it can be viewed as shorthand for the more general and universal definition of “Catholic.” We know that we are all in this together, and the vision statement's first word recognizes this reality of our collective human experience. “We” speaks to the power of CHA members coming together to effect meaningful change. It calls us to align with others of goodwill outside the membership, including our patients, community leaders, government officials and those serving within the Catholic Church. “We” beckons us to explore and enter into new partnerships that can help us achieve our vision. Cynthia Bentzen-Mercer, founder and CEO of Bentzen Performance

Partners, who most recently served as executive vice president and chief administrative officer for Mercy, is a former CHA board member who served on the vision committee. She reminded us that the use of “we” is about being inclusive and is necessary to expand relationships and partnerships to bring the vision to life.

Empower Bold Change

During the many discussions about the statement, there was quite a bit of debate about the word “empower,” but a strong consensus about the need for “bold change.”

One definition of “empower” is “to authorize.” It can also mean “to make stronger.” This second meaning is the intended use of the word in our vision statement. CHA and our members recognize that our collective voice is powerful. Achieving bold change is going to be a heavy lift, however drawing from our combined strength, we can work together to make it happen.

Nearly everyone who offered input on the vision statement agreed that the status quo for U.S. health care is untenable, and incremental progress is simply not enough to bring about meaningful change. There is a deep desire to bring about systemic shifts necessary for a more equitable and just health care funding system. The goal is to create a health care system that is sustainable, encourages innovation, promotes shared responsibility among all stakeholders and ensures that health care is a human right for everyone, including a focus on those who are low-income and vulnerable. As Tina Weatherwax-Grant, JD, senior vice president for public policy and advocacy at Trinity Health — who also served on the board vision committee — said, “Bold change means radically changing systems. Bold is transformational. It’s not merely incremental or even transitional. It’s moving.”

Human Flourishing

An early theme that emerged during the discern-

ment process was that the work must be “of God.” In Gospel teachings, and those of saints such as Thomas Aquinas, we are reminded that “human flourishing” is what God intends for each of us. Another collaborator who served on the vision committee was recent board member Dougal

Hewitt, executive vice president/chief mission and sponsorship officer of Providence St. Joseph Health.

When reflecting on this aspect of the vision statement, he simply reminded us that “there’s that commitment not only to have life but to have it more abundantly.”

Human flourishing, therefore, can be viewed as the desired outcome for our vision statement. This goal is also reflected in CHA’s seven core commitments from our Shared Statement of Identity for the Catholic Health

Ministry, which are:

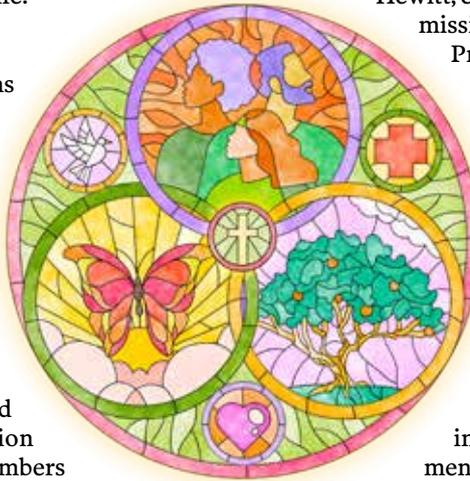
- Promote and Defend Human Dignity
- Attend to the Whole Person
- Care for Poor and Vulnerable Persons
- Promote the Common Good
- Act on Behalf of Justice
- Steward Resources
- Serve as a Ministry of the Church

These core commitments have served as rallying cries for our health care ministry and are powerful reminders that we are responsible for carrying the legacy of our founders.

Within CHA, we’ve talked at length about what human flourishing means and what we must do to truly elevate it. We know an individual’s health is directly affected by the well-being of everyone, and so promoting the common good and attending to the whole person must be viewed as inseparable. We also have the benefit of Catholic social teaching, which underscores the importance of promoting and defending human dignity and caring for those who are poor and vulnerable.

A COMPASS FOR THE FUTURE

Throughout the board visioning process,



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participants were reminded by Laura Kaiser, president and CEO of SSM Health and past chair of CHA's board, that a vision statement should serve as a compass for our collective efforts. The work underway within CHA is to create a road map for our future by developing and adopting a new three-year strategic plan. As with past strategic plans, the road map will set a course and identify markers to gauge our progress. The nine words from our vision statement, and the distinct parts I've just identified, will help identify whom we will invite to come along for the ride, how fast and courageously we want to travel, and where we want to arrive down the road as we continue the mission of Catholic health care.

Fahad Tahir, president and CEO of Ascension Saint Thomas and ministry market executive for Ascension Tennessee, who also served on the board vision committee, summed it up best when he explained that the vision statement "is uniquely important, both because of the voice of who's speaking at CHA, and also the moment we find ourselves in. When you step back and really hear the words, 'We will empower bold change to elevate human flourishing,' it speaks to both the needs of our time and the moral and systematic leadership that we are called to serve." Tahir added that the work of bringing our vision to life "will be energizing. The achievement will be exhilarating and must be worthy of our best efforts."

A related podcast and additional details about CHA's vision statement are available at <https://www.chausa.org/about/vision-statement>.

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(1) Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions stated on Form 3541	12,295	12,301
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

Betsy Taylor, Editor

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