

# One Voice

In my role as a communicator for Covenant Health Systems, I constantly explore different strategies to enhance the way our system communicates our mission and our successes within the communities we serve. I oversee our system's public and media relations, internal communications, and advertising, as well as make sure we are communicating in a manner that is embraced by the public.

When the Catholic Health Association's (CHA) tool kit on the Public Perception Project (P3) crossed my desk, I saw tremendous value in it for incorporating the message platform into Covenant's communications and messaging.

P3's message platform provides Covenant—and, indeed, all Catholic health care providers—with a research-tested method with which we can communicate about the work of our ministry in a manner that will be embraced by the public. The message platform, based on years of both telephone survey and focus group public-opinion research, was developed by more than 50 of our colleagues from all facets of the Catholic health care ministry.

## COORDINATED COMMUNICATION WORKS

Just developing and sharing this research is of tremendous value, because many of the ministry's systems and facilities simply do not have the budgets to develop these types of findings.

Not surprisingly, the findings show how we in the Catholic health care ministry are dedicated to serving our communities. They show that we do so with quality, compassion, vision, and mission.

From my many years in communications in the Catholic health ministry, I know this is true. So it makes good sense to speak in a unified voice to others—including patients, employees, lawmakers, and the public—about the good we do. And successful communications can enable us to be even more of service to them than we are now.

As a communicator on the frontlines of Catholic health care's public relations challenges, I believe it is essential that our ministry communicate with one voice. We have a great deal to

accomplish, especially for the underserved who need our unified voice. P3 gives us the tools to do so.

I was not alone at Covenant in embracing the P3 message platform. Our president/CEO, David R. Lincoln, a former chairperson of the CHA Board of Trustees, fully supported educating those in the system on the project. After reviewing the P3 CD-ROM toolkit and participating in a CHA web-based workshop, we began adopting the P3 messages into Covenant's internal and external communications.

## EDUCATING EMPLOYEES

We began by educating the 1,300 employees and trustees who receive our system newsletter, *News Link*, by dedicating an issue to reporting the

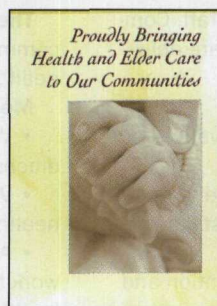
findings of the P3 Steering Committee. The newsletter provided a synopsis of the research behind P3, the actual platform itself, and its uses. In addition, we dedicated time at meetings of our operations, mission, and public relations committees to educating our employees

on the importance of using the message platform to speak with one voice—and we reinforce this at every opportunity. Who better than our own employees to be advocates of the Catholic health ministry?

Covenant's 2004 and 2005 annual reports are other prime examples of the way we have taken the P3 message platform and made it our own. We are committed to sharing the good works of the organizations and facilities that make up Covenant, because we are proud of the work that we do. The P3 message platform provides us with not only the right messages; it also helps us organize our good work for public review. We now use our corporate reports to communicate our success in delivering values-driven care in a consistent manner—that is, with quality, compassion,



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vision, and mission.

Building on these accomplishments, Covenant chose for its 2005 Trustee/Leadership Forum the theme "Quality."



The annual forum is used to educate, build, and celebrate our common heritage as a ministry of the Catholic Church. All system trustees and senior management are invited to attend, along

with representatives of the 14 sponsoring congregations who partner with Covenant.

Using the P3 message platform, we created artwork that symbolized its messages and displayed the artwork in the form of banners at the forum. The artwork and messages were so popular that individual facilities asked for reproductions to hang in their own buildings. The greatest compliment occurred when CHA also adopted the artwork for its P3 efforts.

### **MORE LIKELY TO BE HEARD**

These are just a few examples of how our system has incorporated the P3 message platform in order to help respond to the communications challenges of the 21st century, including the challenge to our freedom to serve in accordance with our beliefs. If we embrace the project, use it, and adapt it, we can improve public appreciation of and sustain strong public support for the wonderful work our systems and facilities perform every day.

When our ministry speaks with one voice in a sustained effort, it is more likely to be heard. ■

**You can view all these and other examples in their entirety on the P3 section of the CHA website at [www.chausa.org](http://www.chausa.org). If you are interested in the work of CHA's P3 or want to share your own examples with the ministry, please contact P3 Project Manager Indu Spugnardi at [ispugnardi@chausa.org](mailto:ispugnardi@chausa.org).**

## **THE P3 MESSAGE PLATFORM**

### **Category: *Quality***

**Theme:** Advanced technology. Highly trained staff. Compassionate service. This is how Catholic health care delivers quality.

#### **Message Points**

- We combine advanced technology and innovative treatment with a caring tradition.
- Doctors and other health professionals come to our (teaching) hospital(s) to learn and practice sophisticated medical treatments with compassion.
- We are dedicated to providing personal attention and care to every person, every step of the way.

### **Category: *Vision***

**Theme:** We work to improve the health status of the communities we serve and are committed to creating health care that works for everyone.

#### **Message Points**

- We welcome and respect people of all beliefs and traditions.
- We partner with communities we serve to improve health and quality of life for everyone.
- As part of improving the health of communities, we work to address the needs of those without access to health care.

### **Category: *Compassion***

**Theme:** Caring for each person—body, mind, and spirit—with respect and dignity. We listen. We explain. We serve with compassion.

#### **Message Points**

- Compassion is the foundation of all that we do.
- At our facility, patients and their families are people first and are treated with compassion, dignity, and respect.
- We attend to the needs of the whole person . . . healing body, mind, and spirit.
- We provide care that embraces a human touch.
- We are here when you need us the most.

### **Category: *Mission***

**Theme:** Reflecting God's love, we are devoted to healing and providing hope.

#### **Message Points**

- God's love inspires our care for the whole person . . . body, mind, and spirit.
- We offer an environment where healing and hope can flourish.
- We cherish our tradition of service and caring.

Additional CHA member information, including a downloadable PDF document (in English and Spanish) regarding the P3 themes and message, can be found at [www.chausa.org/Mem/MainNav/Initiatives/PPP/themes/](http://www.chausa.org/Mem/MainNav/Initiatives/PPP/themes/).