



# Community

## *Partnerships between Catholic Charities and Catholic Healthcare Organizations*

**L**ike other healthcare organizations in the United States, Catholic healthcare facilities are developing new relationships with a wide array of partners to extend their ministry and to improve efficiency, coordination, and quality of care.

In forming these partnerships, Catholic-sponsored organizations may have an advantage over others. Through Catholic Charities and other social service programs, the Catholic Church in the United States is the largest provider of human services. In addition, the Church's network of almost 20,000 parishes enables healthcare organizations to reach into communities where little infrastructure exists. The current movement toward integration of community-based health and social services creates opportunities for Church-sponsored organizations to work together as never before.

*Health Progress* publishes an ongoing series of case studies of such partnerships, hoping they might serve as models for those creating integrated systems of care. These case studies of Catholic Charities agencies and Catholic health organizations were prepared by the Catholic Health Association as part of *New Covenant*, an initiative designed to promote collaborative efforts of the Catholic health ministry at the national and regional levels.

Here is another case study. *Health Progress* will present others in future issues.

**If your healthcare organization is collaborating with a Catholic Charities agency in your area, we would like to know about it. Please contact Julie Trocchio by phone at 202-296-3993 or by e-mail at [jtrocch@chausa.org](mailto:jtrocch@chausa.org).**

# Networks

## Caritas Communities

Youngstown, OH

### Organizational Structure

Caritas Communities is a joint venture of Catholic Charities Housing Opportunities (CCHO) and Humility of Mary Housing Inc. (HMHI), with healthcare provided by St. Elizabeth Health Center; all three are based in Youngstown, OH. HMHI is a ministry of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary. St. Elizabeth is a member of the Humility of Mary Health Partners, a region of Catholic Healthcare Partners (CHP), Cincinnati. The Sisters of the Humility of Mary is a cosponsor of CHP.

### Goals of Affiliation

Caritas Communities was created to provide:

- Safe, secure, affordable housing for those who need it
- Economic development opportunities that help strengthen neighborhoods

### The Project

In early 1996 CCHO and HMHI were approached by the city of Youngstown, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Affairs (HUD), and a local tenants' council and asked to consider a housing development then in default. HUD, which had a mortgage on the property, was willing to sell it for \$1 to a not-for-profit organization that would agree to use it to provide low-income housing for at least 20 years.

CCHO and HMHI formed a corporation called *Caritas Communities* to buy the HUD property, assuming ownership in November 1996. The partners rehabilitated the development with a \$5.5 million low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC); funding, based on equity from the tax credit, came from the state of Ohio, the city of Youngstown, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Youngstown, and the Sisters of the Humility of Mary.

The refurbished property, which has 152 housing units, is currently home to 90 low-income families.

Healthcare for Caritas Communities residents is

provided through a program called the Mobile Clinic, which is sponsored by St. Elizabeth Health Center. Once a month, a physician and nurse come to the development to offer their services. A wellness program called Mercy Caring is also offered through Humility of Mary Health Partners.

Residents were initially slow to respond to the Mobile Clinic. Then the leader of the tenants' council volunteered for a routine physical examination and was found to have breast cancer. The other residents were impressed by the speed and effectiveness of the medical care the leader received. Since then, they have become much more open to the program.

Caritas Communities's board is currently discussing launching a home care or child care agency that would be operated by former welfare recipients.

### Governance Structure

The project is governed by a 13-member board made up of representatives of the CCHO and HMHI boards, Caritas Communities residents, and neighbors of the housing development.

### Staff and Budget

The project's staff is provided by its partners. HMHI is responsible for the development's management and CCHO is responsible for its social services.

Not including staff salaries, paid by the project partners, *Caritas Communities* has a \$50,000 annual budget. A budget for the property's maintenance is managed through two LIHTC subsidiary corporations.

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### Practical Advice

**Get to know the members of the community you're serving. Ask them about their needs. Work hard at keeping lines of communication open.**