



Community

Partnerships between Catholic Health Care Organizations, Catholic Charities, and Other Groups

Like other health care organizations in the United States, Catholic health care 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 health care 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 partnerships between Catholic health care organizations, Catholic Charities agencies, and other groups 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 health care organization is involved in a similar collaboration, 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.

Networks

St. Paul's Caritas Health Ministry

Flushing, NY

Organizational Structure

The program is sponsored by a church committee composed of local health care professionals and others. The committee's chairperson is also a member of the board of Catholic Charities of Brooklyn, NY.

Goals of Affiliation

The program was established to provide holistic health care—care that is spiritual as well as physical and mental—to people, especially poor Korean immigrants, who otherwise might not have access to it.

The Project

St. Paul's, which today has a congregation of some 7,000, was created nearly 30 years ago in the borough of Queens by a half-dozen immigrant families from South Korea. Its pastors have always encouraged parishioners to take a broad, holistic view of ministry. For instance, a church-sponsored credit union helps new immigrants start small businesses. Since its early days, the church has held health screenings; these eventually took formal shape as the Caritas Health Ministry, a committee of the church.

The ministry, chaired by a church member who is a retired physician, holds a screening clinic on church property on the first and third Sundays of each month. The clinic is open to people of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds. On average, 10 to 15 people attend these sessions.

The clinic's staff takes medical histories, blood pressure readings, and blood and urine samples. Patients then return two weeks later to discuss the laboratory results with the staff. (Staff members seek out those who fail to return.) Patients with insurance are referred to their treating physicians; the uninsured and indigent are referred to Health Reach New York, a volunteer organization based

in Queens, and other medical facilities.

The ministry's eventual goal is to turn its screening clinic into a community health center. "Religion should be more than celebrating Mass and then going back home," says the ministry's chairman, who notes that from 200 to 300 adults (along with many children) are baptized at St. Paul's each year. "Caritas Health Ministry is part of the small Catholic Korea we have created in Queens."

Governance Structure

The committee, composed of church members, includes physicians, nurses, and nonmedical volunteers.

Staff

The ministry is currently staffed by 15 physicians, 20 nurses, and 10 young parishioners who perform clerical duties.

Budget

Labor is all voluntary. Funding for the clinic's other needs, primarily medical supplies, is provided by the church.

Effect on Community

The program is vital to Queens' large Korean immigrant population, especially to the young women who work in local chemical and metallurgical plants.

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Practical Advice

Health ministry is not the same as holding health fairs. Health ministry requires conscientious follow-up, without which people tend to fall through the cracks.