



Community

Partnerships between Catholic Charities and Catholic Healthcare Organizations

Like 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 (see *Profile of a Community Partner: Building Networks with Catholic Charities*, Catholic Health Association [CHA], 1996). 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.

In its January-February 1997 issue, *Health Progress* began offering a 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: A Health Ministry for the 21st Century*, an initiative cosponsored by the National Coalition on Catholic Health Care Ministry, the Catholic Health Association, and Consolidated Catholic Healthcare. The *New Covenant* process is designed to strengthen and promote the organized expression of the Catholic health ministry through strategies and actions 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 jtrocchi@chausa.org.

Networks

Samaritan Place

Knoxville, TN

Organizational Structure

Samaritan Place is a joint program of Catholic Charities, Knoxville Division, and St. Mary's Health System, Knoxville, TN.

Goals of Affiliation

The project provides transitional housing for elderly people who have lost their homes; are victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation; are in homes needing major repair; or whose safety is threatened for other reasons. Samaritan Place also offers beds for elderly people whose caregivers need a respite.

The Project

For 20 years Catholic Charities had sponsored a program in which elderly people were visited in their homes, but it became obvious in the early 1990s that an emergency shelter was needed. Samaritan Place was accordingly opened in May 1998, in an unused wing of St. Mary's Medical Center.

Samaritan Place has 18 beds, 10 of them reserved for older people needing free temporary housing. The other eight beds are for older people whose caregivers need a brief respite (these beds are \$90 for a single room and \$75 for a double).

Guests must be 55 or older, ambulatory, medically stable, and able to take basic care of themselves (including knowing when to take medication). Aides who specialize in eldercare staff the program.

St. Mary's provides, besides the shelter itself, meals, laundry, housekeeping, and security. Catholic Charities directs the program and pays the staff.

Samaritan Place is open around the clock 365 days a year. Occupancy typically ranges between

30 percent and 60 percent; it is never allowed to exceed 75 percent, to save beds for newcomers. The average stay is 26 days (chronically homeless people are ineligible). Samaritan Place is one of only eight such shelters in the United States; on any given night, the entire nation has no more than 56 emergency shelter beds for the elderly.

Staffing and Budget

Nine eldercare specialists staff Samaritan Place. Its annual budget is about \$165,000, some of which comes from the respite care program, the local United Way, Title III of the federal Older Americans Act, the federal Victims of Crime Act, foundation grants, and individual donors.

Governance Structure

Catholic Charities' board oversees the project. A member of that board and one from the board of St. Mary's Health System provide liaison between the sponsoring organizations. The project's leaders are now forming an advisory board that will include community representatives.

Effect on Community

Samaritan has been welcomed by the community, especially by police, social workers, and healthcare professionals who formerly had no place to send abused or homeless older people.

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Practical Advice

In creating transitional housing, especially if your partner is a hospital, make sure everyone—emergency room, housekeeping, security, dietary services, and all the others—is in on the planning.