



community networks

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.

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HEALTHY CHOICES TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAM



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Organizational Structure

Healthy Choices is a collaborative project involving Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Center for Psychological Services; Providence Health System/Los Angeles Service Area; and St. Anne's Community Outreach Services.

Goals of Affiliation

Healthy Choices has two primary goals:

- To reduce the pregnancy rate among area teenagers
- To provide those teenagers who do become pregnant with healthcare information and training in skills involving parenting and decision making.

The Project

In February 1997, soon after the state legislature had approved the funding of a program meant to address the growing teenage pregnancy rate in California, Catholic Charities of Los Angeles persuaded Providence Health System/Los Angeles Service Area and St. Anne's Community Outreach Services to join it in forming a collaborative effort for the eastern San Fernando Valley.

The resulting Healthy Choices Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program received a state grant, as did similar efforts in other parts of California. The Healthy Choices grant will run through June 1999.

The state program is experimental in that local efforts are encouraged to focus on one of three different methods: educating teenagers in general about pregnancy risks; mentoring teenagers at risk for pregnancy; and encouraging sexual responsibility among teenage boys. A team from the University of San Francisco will collate the data from these local programs and determine which works best.

Healthy Choices decided it would be an educational program. The three project partners designed a comprehensive curriculum that its educators use to discuss pregnancy and parenting issues with teenagers in area middle

schools and high schools. Educators from St. Anne's work with presexual teens; those from Providence specialize in medical issues arising from pregnancy and in parenting skills; and those from Catholic Charities focus on psychological issues such as self-esteem.

Governance Structure

Healthy Choices is governed by a collaborative board comprising coordinators from each of the project's partners and about a dozen project educators. The board meets weekly.

A second group, the Auxiliary Board, is developing ways the project might be funded if the state grant is not renewed in 1999. This group, composed of community members, meets monthly.

Staffing and Budget

Healthy Choices staff currently comprises the three coordinators, three educators from Catholic Charities, three from Providence, and five from St. Anne's. A state grant funds the program.

Effect on the Community

It is too soon to judge Healthy Choice's effect on the community. The project is trying to change attitudes; evidence for such changes will include, for example, an increase in the number of teenage girls who finish school after having a baby.

practical advice

- In this work, it is sometimes better to emphasize "success in life" rather than "pregnancy prevention." If not, people from some cultures will say, "They just want us to have fewer babies."