



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 are two more case studies. *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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HOSPICE OF ST. FRANCIS COMMUNITY BEREAVEMENT COUNCIL



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Organizational Structure

The Hospice of St. Francis Community Bereavement Council is an informal organization comprising St. Francis Hospital Home Health/Hospice; the Area Agency on Aging, a component of Catholic Charities of the Pittsburgh Diocese; Lawrence County (PA) Health and Human Services; the Red Cross; and Lawrence County's schools.

guidance personnel, volunteered for the training, which was carried out by professional counselors in the spring of 1997.

In the past year the volunteers have helped create bereavement support groups in the area's schools and nursing homes. They have found an especially strong need for such services among the family members of nursing home residents, many of whom suffer "anticipatory grief."

Governance Structure

The Community Bereavement Council has an informal structure. Representatives of its member organizations meet monthly to discuss its progress.

Goals of Affiliation

In the autumn of 1996, following several highly publicized air crashes (including one in which more than a dozen eastern Pennsylvania high school students died), area leaders formed the Community Bereavement Task Force. The group had two goals:

- To plan the bereavement support that would be needed should a similar disaster occur in Lawrence County
- To organize bereavement support for those experiencing the less dramatic but far more common tragedies of everyday life

The Project

In late 1996 and early 1997 the task force—aided by a psychiatrist, pastoral care specialists, and emergency services personnel—met monthly to discuss the area's bereavement needs. School officials played a key role in these talks, which revealed that the schools had only ad hoc plans for counseling students after a disaster. In particular, school representatives urged the task force to create some form of support for children with ongoing bereavement problems.

The task force decided to recruit and train a group of volunteers to build a bereavement support network for the area. With the help of the psychiatrist, a psychiatric nurse practitioner, and a psychiatric nurse, the task force designed a training outline. Nineteen volunteers, including some school

Staffing and Budget

The Community Bereavement Council's staff members are all volunteers, as were the specialists who trained them. The council has no budget.

Effect on Community

The Community Bereavement Council's work has gotten a positive response from its community. In addition, healthcare officials in a neighboring county have suggested reorganizing the council on a regional basis. Healthcare leaders in Philadelphia asked for the council's help in creating groups of bereavement volunteers to work with inner-city children.

practical advice

- It's vital to involve local schools in the creation of a bereavement support network.
- If disaster should strike, an existing bereavement support network would provide the community with a priceless resource. And the mere building of such a network strengthens the community.

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HANNAH'S HOUSE

Mishawaka, IN

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Organizational Structure

Hannah's House is the result of collaboration among four organizations: Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ft. Wayne/South Bend, IN; St. Joseph's Hospital, Mishawaka, IN; The Women's Care Center, South Bend; and Bethel College, Mishawaka.

Goals of Affiliation

Hannah House was started in 1993 to fill a need for a residential facility with resources for healthcare, counseling, and support for young pregnant women in Mishawaka. St. Joseph's Hospital supplies prenatal and delivery care; the Women's Care Center provides counseling services; Bethel College students work as volunteers at the house and the college also helps with maintenance of the residence; and Catholic Charities administers the program.

The Project

Hannah's House is a residential home in Mishawaka, located two blocks from St. Joseph's Hospital. It can house up to 7 young pregnant women; residents are generally in their teens or twenties. Many of them have a history of drug abuse or mental problems. Residents come to Hannah's House at any time during pregnancy, and may stay up to two months after delivery. Residents are referred to Hannah's House through other agencies. At Hannah's House, residents receive prenatal care, counseling, and support.

Governance Structure

Hannah's House is governed by a board made up of the four founding organizations. Catholic Charities, which has administrative responsibilities for Hannah's House, reports to the board.

Staffing and Budget

Hannah's House is staffed by a director and three houseparents, who work on rotating shifts. Funding for the program comes from the four founding organizations, residents' fees (which are calculated on a sliding scale), and fund-raising efforts. An annual Christmas dinner and auction cosponsored by Catholic Charities and St. Joseph's Hospital is the major fund-raising event.

Effect on the Community

All Hannah's House residents who have carried their babies to term have delivered healthy infants, and those who have remained in contact after leaving the residence show that they have benefited from their time there through improved family relationships and parenting skills.

practical advice

- Always keep the channels of communication open.
- Utilize the resources and expertise that each partner is best equipped to supply.