



# 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

## Pastoral Project on Domestic Violence

Omaha

### Organizational Structure

The Pastoral Project on Domestic Violence (PPDV) is a collaboration involving the Archdiocese of Omaha; Catholic Charities of Omaha; Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI), Denver; and the Pastoral Awareness Network, a group of Catholic women active in Omaha parishes.

### Goals of Affiliation

PPDV's goal is to increase awareness in Archdiocese of Omaha parishes of domestic violence as a social problem. The project enlists church groups in the creation of violence-prevention programs and in aiding victims of domestic violence by referring them to counselors, shelters, and support groups, as well as by offering them spiritual support.

### The Project

PPDV, launched in July 1998, held two conferences for archdiocesan priests in November of that year. (Twenty-four attended a session in the city; another 22 attended one in Schuyler, NE, for clergy from rural parishes.) The keynote speaker at both sessions was Rev. Stephen Dohner, a domestic violence counselor from the Diocese of Cleveland. Among the other speakers were a former domestic violence victim, a former batterer, a director of a women's shelter, and a counselor for a group of recovering batterers.

The speakers introduced conference participants to various resources that can be used for increasing awareness of domestic violence among parishioners and for aiding victims. Questionnaires completed before and after the conference indicated that participants had learned much and were eager to learn more.

After the conference, PPDV hired facilitators who, working in teams of two, travel around the archdiocese's 157 parishes. The facilitators discuss domestic violence with priests, parish staff, and

parishioners; assess parish resources for dealing with the problem; and help parish leaders develop local plans—including arranging meetings and inviting speakers—for drawing attention to it. The facilitators also encourage parishes to raise the issue in confirmation, premarriage, and baptism preparation classes and in other parish groups. They emphasize programs for teenagers who are just beginning to date.

PPDV is currently developing a Web site and writing a how-to manual for people wanting to start similar projects. In November it will host a conference for laypeople.

### Governance Structure

PPDV is governed by an advisory board, composed of two representatives from each partner organization, which meets monthly.

### Staff and Budget

PPDV is staffed by its executive director, a part-time secretary, and seven part-time facilitators. The executive director, whose degrees are in sociology, has 10 years' experience in dealing with family issues. Most facilitators have master's degrees.

The project is funded by a three-year, \$264,223 grant from CHI's Mission and Ministry Fund.

### Effect on Community

PPDV has greatly increased local awareness of domestic violence. PPDV staff members, whose primary focus is Catholic parishes, now work with other denominations as well.

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### Practical Advice

**The support of the archdiocese has been very important to the project's success.**