



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. 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.

Networks

Collaboration

Hampton Roads, VA

Organizational Structure

This is an essentially informal coalition involving Catholic Charities of Hampton Roads; Bon Secours De Paul Medical Center, Norfolk, VA; Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA; Mary Immaculate Hospital, Newport News, VA; the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters Foundation, King of Prussia, PA; and area churches.

Goals of Affiliation

The coalition aims in a variety of ways to form a protective net under the area's vulnerable older residents.

The Project

The coalition began in 1995 when Catholic Charities and several area churches brought together a group of volunteers to make repairs to the homes of needy people aged 60 or older. This effort later became known as the Help for Elderly People (H.E.L.P.) project, in which volunteers not only made minor home repairs but also visited elderly people, gave them reassurance over the telephone, provided transportation to medical appointments, and did some yard work and shopping for them. This project, which continues, is funded by Catholic Charities, the United Way, and the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters Foundation and has also received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In 1999, 287 elderly people were helped in this way.

In recent years, intake workers at Catholic Charities and local hospitals had noticed an increasing number of vulnerable older people who lacked family connections and needed guardians or conservators. Catholic Charities and De Paul Medical Center collaborated to form the Guardianship program. Under it, Catholic

Charities is named as the legal guardian or conservator; its staff members act as case managers. De Paul Medical Center provides the needed health-care services. The program is primarily funded by the Bon Secours Ministry, Marriottsville, MD.

The coalition is also involved in two other programs:

- Community Outreach Services offers H.E.L.P.-type services (see above) and stress counseling to family caretakers of high-risk elderly people. The program, which currently has 100 volunteers, is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the local United Way, Catholic Charities, and the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters Foundation.

- The Parish Nurse Program, launched in 1999 by De Paul Medical Center, offers parish nurse services at 15 local churches. Catholic Charities provides social-service training for the parish nurse volunteers. In turn, the parish nurses make referrals to H.E.L.P. and the Guardianship program.

Governance Structure

The coalition's structure is largely informal, although the Guardianship program has an advisory board, which meets quarterly (although it remains on 24-hour call). The board's eight members, who are appointed by Catholic Charities, include a priest, a Baptist minister, an accountant, and De Paul Medical Center's ethics specialist.

Staff

The coalition's projects are largely staffed by volunteers.

Contact:

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Practical Advice

Start small. Realize that you're only a part of the continuum of care, not the whole. Count on doing a lot of networking and collaborating with other agencies.