

Reflection on Mission

BY SR. MARYALINE ZIERLE, OP

In October 1997 the diocese of Rockville Centre, Long Island, NY, established Catholic Health Services (CHS) of Long Island. The system's many facilities constitute a continuum of care that includes all aspects of hospital-centered and ambulance services, care for the aging, a regional home care and hospice network, and community-based care for people with special needs.

One of the main goals of the founders of CHS was to develop the mission, values, and vision for the system. The resulting mission statement focused on six values that were inclusive and highlighted the deep devotion of the founders:

- *Compassionate care* for all we serve
- *Justice* for all whom we encounter, including our staff
- *Integrity* in all our business dealings
- *Deep respect* for the dignity of each person
- *Fidelity* to the teachings of the church
- *Reverence* for the traditions of the women religious that inspire and nurture our apostolate

Maryhaven Center of Hope, a CHS member agency caring for approximately 2,000 developmentally disabled/mentally ill children and adults, took up the challenge of implementing the CHS mission among its employees. Maryhaven's range of services includes a residential school, continuing day treatment for mentally ill adults, day programs for developmentally disabled adults and group homes for adults. The staff includes a large percentage of direct care counselors, who hold entry-level, direct care positions that require a high school diploma and the ability to demonstrate deep respect for the dignity of each individual.

Encouraged by Lewis Grossman, chief executive officer of Maryhaven, and the newly formed Mission and Ministry Committee of the Board of Governors, we formulated an innovative program to carry out our objective. Our program focuses on "days of reflection," which have now been hosted for the past three years. The Daughters of Wisdom, the religious community that founded



Sr. Zierle is

director of Pastoral

Care, Maryhaven

Center of Hope,

Port Jefferson, NY.

the facility, has donated the use of a 75-year-old home to host days of reflection each spring and fall. Appropriately named "Star of the Sea," the house overlooks Port Jefferson harbor and is primarily a retreat and vacation center for this community of sisters, which founded three CHS of Long Island facilities: St. Charles Hospital, Maryhaven Center of Hope, and Good Samaritan Hospital.

In an atmosphere of beauty, quiet, and restfulness, a daylong program is offered eight times a year to invited groups of approximately 30 employees. These groups contain a mixture of board members, administrators, office personnel, maintenance, direct care, support services, and clinical staff. They come together for a day of meditation, reflection, and companionship. Since its inception three years ago, approximately 600 staff members have attended the program to renew their understanding of the CHS mission.

The reflection day itself begins with a creative visualization exercise to lighten any apprehension and lessen defenses. Then, in the spirit of the CHS core value "reverence for the women religious founders," Provincial Superior Sr. Evelyn Eckhardt, DW, presents a history of the Daughters of Wisdom from their inception in France to the development of Maryhaven in the 1930s. CHS Senior Vice President Monsignor Dennis M. Regan, STD, presents the values, emphasizing in particular the value of compassion. After these sessions, the group is released (armed with a reading by Fr. Henri Nouwen) for a quiet 45 minutes to reflect, walk the beach, or rest.

Afterwards, in small group discussions, participants learn from their coworkers about the variety of Maryhaven ministries—from assisting the patients with their morning care goals to job placement in the community. All participants are given time to share what draws them to this service and what helps to fulfill their own personal goals. After lunch, time is spent in a short "loving kindness meditation," which inspires each listener to reflect

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Mission Statement

Health Progress is a forum for the exchange of ideas and information that enable members of the Catholic Health Association to shape a new future for the Catholic health ministry and promote a just U.S. health care system. Through in-depth analysis, *Health Progress* explores the Catholic health ministry's strategic strengths, fosters healthy communities, and influences the social debate on health care issues. The journal encourages examination of health care practices in light of Catholic values, especially human dignity, the common good, care of the needy, and stewardship of resources.

Accordingly, *Health Progress* focuses on:

- Ethical issues
- Leadership development
- The relationship between Catholic church teaching and health care delivery
- Reform of the U.S. health care system and integrated delivery of care
- The continuum of care and integrated delivery
- Sponsorship options
- Health and well-being
- Operational issues
- Collaborative strategies

Information for Authors

Health Progress's readers have diverse interests in many aspects of health care. The journal's audience includes chief executive and chief financial officers, administrators, trustees, department heads and personnel, religious sponsors, physicians, nurses, attorneys, and policymakers. The journal covers a variety of health care management issues. These include (but are not limited to) corporate structure, finance, ethics, information systems, mission effectiveness, law, marketing, pastoral care, sponsorship, health policy, human resources, education, and governance.

SUBMITTING THE MANUSCRIPT

Manuscripts are generally 2,000 to 3,000 words, except for columns, which are 750 to 1,000 words. Manuscripts must be typed and double spaced. On a separate title page, indicate the author's academic degree and current position.

The editor will consider only manuscripts that are submitted exclusively to *Health Progress* and that have not been previously published. Submit two copies of the manuscript to: Editor, *Health Progress*, 4455 Woodson Road, St. Louis, MO 63134-3797. Enclose a disk if possible. You may submit a manuscript by e-mail also; send to hpeditor@chausa.org. Include a cover letter and address and phone number. For more detailed information, contact the editor.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters expressing readers' opinions are welcome. Letters for publication should be signed. They may be edited for clarity or to fit space. Send e-mail to hpeditor@chausa.org.

FINAL SAY

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Employees who have participated have expressed renewed spirit and dedication.

on ways to appreciate our own inner beauty. This is followed by further reflection on the Maryhaven mission as expressed by participants during the morning discussion. Emphasis is placed on the six core values of CHS and how they coincide with the ministries at Maryhaven. Prayer, a brief video of meditation, and a blessing service conclude the day of reflection. Participants are left with these closing words: "May God bless the work of your hands and your heart."

As the program has grown, the staff from St. Charles Hospital, which shares the same history as Maryhaven, has begun to attend as well. Invitations have also recently been sent to the administrators of CHS of Long Island and the mission leaders of the other CHS facilities. In addition, employees who have participated in this program have expressed renewal of spirit and dedication to the special people served by Maryhaven Center of Hope. A "Reflection Day 2" has been developed in response to staff requests to revisit the spiritual grounding experienced at the original retreat. At the end of one recent day of reflection, a nurse gave voice to her feelings: "When I was a full-time mother, I had time to work in my church. But when I became a full-time nurse *and* mother, I could no longer volunteer at church. What has been made very clear to me at this reflection day is that I *am* doing God's ministry here at Maryhaven." □