



## SPECIAL SECTION

# PHYSICIANS AND SPIRITUALITY

**T**he relationship between medicine and spirituality has been the focus of considerable interest in recent years. Studies suggest that many patients believe that spirituality plays an important role in their lives; that a positive relationship exists between their spirituality or religious commitment, on one hand, and health outcomes, on the other; and that physicians and other caregivers should consider these factors in their medical care.

And just as patients' spiritual needs are important, so too are those of the other half in the patient-physician relationship. Physicians increasingly seek contact with and guidance from their own spirituality.

Physicians and Catholic health care organizations alike are answering the call to increase focus on personal spirituality as a way of coping with the challenges the current medical climate presents for those practicing medicine. The articles in this special section outline some of those initiatives.

—KIM VAN OOSTEN