

CHA Project Identifies Core Leadership Competencies

To thrive in a time of fundamental change, the Catholic healthcare ministry needs visionary, committed leaders who embrace change and values and can guide others through the difficult transitions ahead. The Catholic Health Association's (CHA's) recently completed research project *Transformational Leadership for the Healing Ministry: Competencies for the Future* identifies core competencies of outstanding leaders in the ministry.

Lawrence D. Prybil, regional executive and chief executive officer of the Daughters of Charity National Health System—East Central, Evansville, IN, called the transformational leadership project a "landmark work." With sweeping changes already taking place in healthcare and more on the way, he said, CHA's study comes at a critical juncture. "The project will set a precedent for the qualities and attributes we need to build toward in terms of future organizational leadership," Prybil said. The results of the study will be published in the June issue of *Health Progress* and released June 6 at the Catholic Health Assembly in Philadelphia.

One key competency is the ability to work well with a variety of stakeholders, said Russell Coile, president of the Health Forecasting Group, Santa Clarita, CA. As hospitals collaborate with various agencies to improve community health, he said, they "will need people who can develop a network of local relations." Hospitals will also require leaders who can forge productive relationships with physicians and insurers, Coile added.

Coile and Prybil, both members of CHA's Center for Leadership Excellence Advisory Committee, emphasized that CHA's study is not intended to dictate the kinds of leaders Catholic providers should be seeking. "The point of the study is not to create an elite group but to enable CHA to help members strengthen their leadership development process," Coile said. Prybil noted that individual boards must still take

responsibility for determining their organizations' leadership needs.

Although many of the core competencies that define outstanding leaders will remain the same, the challenges leaders face in the future will be different, Prybil said. "Now more than ever there is a premium on leaders who can deal with and thrive in change," he emphasized. He added that perhaps the major change leaders must negotiate is the shift from emphasizing acute care to collaborating for improved community health.

Coile stressed the need for leaders who are skilled at the kind of model building it will take to put together a new type of organization. "Leaders will have to reinvent the inside of hospitals," he said. "And they will have to transform their employees' vision of what a hospital is and does, motivating them to see change not as a threat but an opportunity."

Prybil said that his involvement with the Center for Leadership Excellence Advisory Committee has been a valuable experience in its own right. "Taking part in the planning, discussion, and evaluation of the leadership competencies project has helped me broaden my definition of the qualities and attributes needed for effective leadership," he said.

—Phil Rheinecker

The project will set a precedent for the qualities needed for future leadership,
said
Lawrence D. Prybil.

ASSESSMENT TOOL

An assessment tool designed to assist senior executives in their leadership development efforts will be demonstrated at the annual Catholic Health Assembly in June.

The assessment tool conforms with the competency model developed by CHA in its transformational leadership study. One application of the tool gives individuals and teams an opportunity to generate a personal and professional development profile in light of CHA's competency model. Other applications of the tool will be demonstrated at the assembly.

CHA plans to pilot the assessment service this fall.