

CHA's Study Helps In the Search for New Leaders

In the past 30 years Catholic healthcare has seen a radical transformation of its executive leadership. Women and men religious once dominated the key positions in Catholic health facilities, but today laypersons occupy 81 percent of those posts.

Such a drastic leadership shift has naturally brought with it a challenge to maintain the Catholic identity of the healthcare organizations for which they are responsible.

Last year the Catholic Health Association's Center for Leadership Excellence commissioned a study, "Transformational Leadership for the Healing Ministry: Competencies for the Future," to discover the critical success factors that will enable the healing ministry to not only survive but thrive. The results of the study were revealed at CHA's 1994 assembly. (See *Health Progress*, June, pp. 28-39; and July-August, pp. 35-38.)

Will the study and related services and programs offered by the center help Catholic healthcare develop a new generation of leaders? Yes, says Christopher Carney, chief executive officer (CEO), St. Mary's Hospital, Richmond, VA.

"In these turbulent times, it would be easy to steer off course if we had no guiding star," says Carney, who attended the assembly. "We need tools like this study."

Sr. Judy Cannon, RSM, director of mission for the Sisters of Mercy congregation, based in West Hartford, CT, says she was not surprised that the study found leaders in Catholic healthcare to be motivated differently than other executives. "I have long believed that myself," she says.

The study, based on interviews with 60 outstanding leaders in Catholic healthcare, showed that they are more likely than other executives to have both a strong sense of personal spirituality and a strong desire to be of service to others. These traits were among 18 the study's authors described as "competencies" vital to Catholic healthcare leadership. The study's authors—John Larrere, senior vice president of Hay McBer, Boston; David McClelland, PhD, chairman,

McBer & Company, Boston; Rev. David Nygren, CM, PhD, director of the Center for Applied Social Research, Chicago; and Sr. Miriam D. Ukeritis, CSJ, PhD, a research associate at the center—recommended that the competencies be actively sought and nurtured in potential leaders.

Sr. Cannon describes the notion of competencies as "an excellent tool" in the search for Catholic healthcare leadership. At the assembly, CHA introduced an array of products, including Dossier, a method of assessing and developing individual leaders and leadership teams using the competency model.

"I tried Dossier myself at the assembly," says Sr. Cannon. "It blends two vocabularies, religious and professional. And it is very specific."

Carney agrees, but thinks that using the method to find potential leaders will be "a long-term project. [St. Mary's] may choose to first field-test the study," he says. "It should help us locate new leaders, but it won't happen overnight."

William Joel, an administrative resident at St. Vincent's Medical Center in New York City, says Dossier should help fill a growing need in Catholic healthcare facilities.

"Catholic hospitals tend to be very cohesive, and charismatic leadership is important to them. This new tool should help us find such leaders," Joel says.

"Catholic healthcare leaders are—or at least should be—different," says Thomas Beeman, senior vice president of Franciscan Health System, in Aston, PA. Beeman says Dossier will help Catholic healthcare facilities recruit leaders "with a good mix of technical skills and firm spiritual commitments. Not all will be Catholics of course, but all should share very firm principles."

—Gordon Burnside

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☎ For more information on CHA's Center for Leadership Excellence, the competency study, or Dossier, call Regina Clifton or Jim McEnroe at 314-427-2500, or send in the postage-paid reply card inserted in this issue.