

TENDING TO MISSION: LISTEN, LEARN, RESPOND

We never know where the Spirit may lead us on our path to continue Jesus' mission of love. As CHA's new director of mission services, I am honored to serve you and help strengthen your commitment to Catholic health care. Together, we tend the vision and values planted by our founders as we carry on the healing ministry of Jesus. It is an overwhelmingly generative call, and I look forward to cultivating this ground with you.



JILL FISK

In my role at CHA, I support mission integration, spiritual/pastoral care and well-being. In my former position with Mercy's system office, I standardized personal formation for leaders at the director-and-above levels across the ministry, developed leader formation content and identified best practices in formation facilitation. I wanted to provide an update on some of CHA's recent work in the mission department.

HEALTH EQUITY, MISSION LEADERSHIP AND WELL-BEING DEVELOPMENTS

This past spring, we welcomed back the return of in-person gatherings. In March, Fr. Charles Bouchard, OP, STD, and Dennis Gonzales, PhD, co-hosted CHA's Critical Conversations meeting in Dallas. At the gathering, CEOs, sponsors and chief mission officers focused on caregiver well-being, the ministry's work as part of the "We Are Called" pledge to end systemic racism, and other pressing theological, political and ethical issues facing our ministry.

Through a conversation led by members of CHA's Well-Being Task Force to address the necessity of mental health welfare for caregivers, four crucial areas of focus were identified: psychological/mental well-being, psychological safety, purpose/mission and people. Other highlights included a thought-provoking presentation by LivingUNDIVIDED, a national faith-based group specializing in diversity, equity and inclusion, and guest speaker and liturgy celebrant Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville, Texas. He and Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM, CHA's president and CEO, led a

panel discussion on critical ministry topics.

Additionally, in April, CHA hosted a trilogy webinar series for new and newer mission leaders to discuss the Mission Leader Competency model in the areas of strategy and operations, advocacy and executive presence.¹ Participants were encouraged to strengthen relationships with executive partners by offering open-ended inquiry, cross-departmental mentoring and continually returning to the vision and values of Catholic health care's identity as incarnational, communal and sacramental. Other significant moments included an advocacy session that discussed ways to engage with community stakeholders. The final session addressed the essentials needed to embody mission in the everyday presence of our ministries.

Looking ahead, CHA will once again convene mission leaders from across the ministry during our annual Mission Leader Seminar. Taking place in early November, this virtual experience will inspire and cultivate a renewed sense of purpose that will sustain and inspire leaders in their work and call to serve.

Heightening a rapid response to whole-person care, the pandemic has called us to care for patients, coworkers, providers and communities as one health care ministry. Through our distinct Catholic lens, flourishing and well-being can be seen and understood holistically and communally. In this important work, CHA's Well-Being Task Force continues to actively seek input from members to identify and share strategies and outcomes that address well-being for systems and individual coworkers. To further expand on this effort, the task force is conducting a well-being assessment of the entire ministry, and results will be shared in the future.

PASTORAL/SPIRITUAL CARE FUTURE GROWTH

Similar to the work of well-being, CHA's Spiritual Care Advisory Council has identified future priorities, with staffing, standards and benchmarking remaining a focus as our ministries look to ensure identity beyond the scope of the acute care setting. Our Catholic covenant to care for persons young and old calls us, as Pope Francis notes, to "a fuller vision of our life together,"² as we support those serving or residing in continuing care communities.

The council will also explore what is needed for professional development, as senior roles in spiritual care are increasingly being filled by non-Catholic leaders. Succession planning is vital to sustain our identity as both inclusive and deeply Catholic, and the National Association of Catholic Chaplains will be a vital partner in this endeavor.

Finally, we aim to identify and equip members around standards of spiritual care designed for newer models across the continuum that have emerged in the last few years. As you continue to innovate, we will continue to listen, learn and respond. Together, we are called.

JILL FISK, MATM, is director, mission services, for the Catholic Health Association, St. Louis.

NOTES

1. "The Mission Leader Competency Model," Catholic Health Association, <https://www.chausa.org/mission/mission-leader-competencies>.
2. Pope Francis, *Cathechesis on Old Age - 2*, (Vatican 2022), <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2022/documents/20220302-udienza-generale.html>.

PAUSE. BREATHE. HEAL.

Your Steadfast Love

For just this moment, bring your attention to your breath.

INHALE deeply and settle yourself into your body.

EXHALE the stress and tension you feel.

On your next inhale, pray, Your Steadfast Love

And as you exhale, Endures Forever.

Your Steadfast Love

Endures Forever

KEEP BREATHING this prayer for a few moments.

(Repeat the prayer several times.)

CONCLUDE, REMEMBERING:

Even now, God is with you, as near to you as your breath.

Continue giving yourself the gift to pause, breathe and heal, knowing you are not alone.

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands. PSALM 138:8 (ESV)

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JOURNAL OF THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

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HEALTH PROGRESS®

Reprinted from *Health Progress*, Summer 2022, Vol. 103, No. 3
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