As the quotes below show, health care reform has been a long time coming. U.S. presidents going back to Harry S. Truman have stated the national urgency of creating a health care system that is available and affordable to everyone. Unfortunately, during these six-plus decades, our problems in health care have only grown worse. Millions in our society still lack access to quality health care as we await meaningful health care reform.

As Sr. Carol Keehan, DC, writes in the lead article of this special section of Health Progress ("Yes! The Time is Now," p. 18), we find ourselves in a promising moment. A fast-growing number of Americans, political leaders and advocacy groups agree: The need to reform the U.S. health care system is urgent.

While the current environment is exciting and hopeful, it involves many difficult issues. The editorial team at Health Progress assembled this edition to examine and explain some of those: the principles the Catholic Health Association will stand by regardless of how things move forward, the fears that block the way,
the models we might look to, the relationship between market forces and Catholic values, the coverage and delivery system matters that need attention, some of the choices that will have to be made, and finally, why Catholic health care will remain a vital ministry when a person's ability to pay is no longer a primary issue. The perspectives of the diverse group of experts represented in the following pages will help each of us sort through the complexities that demand our time, intelligence, creativity, energy and persistence.

The CHA is grateful to the writers who contributed their time and talent to this issue of Health Progress, and to all of the journal’s readers for the work they do every day to deliver quality, compassionate health care. Health care reform is more than a possibility now, and it will take the collective voice of all in the ministry to make sure it stays that way.

—Jeff Tieman, CHA Senior Director Health Reform Initiatives