

# THE PATH AHEAD

**L**ike many of you, I have enjoyed reading the stories that celebrate the 100th anniversary of *Health Progress* and appreciate the fresh perspective on the events of the past. In addition to the interesting articles and reflections, I particularly have enjoyed viewing the publication's ads through the years that we've posted on CHA's website. I smiled, thinking Gumpert's Gelatine Dessert may have been the likely centerpiece on hospital trays for many patients. Additionally, I was quite surprised to learn that at one time hospitals could buy their alcohol direct from the distiller. Thank you, Milwaukee! Times have changed and so has Catholic health care.

This walk down memory lane caused me to pause and wonder about what Cath-



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olic health care will look like in 2120, and what that generation will have to say about our reality today. What will people think about the ecological footprint created by health care? How will they understand our challenge to address social determinants that impact a person's overall health and well-being? How will they perceive a society that lacks understanding of death as part of life and struggles to provide good palliative care as well as hospice care? How will they remember a society that isolated itself and closed its borders to neighbors in need?

As I begin my role as the 10th president and chief executive officer of the Catholic Health Association, I understand the many

challenges, and I anticipate the road ahead will be filled with much uncertainty. But I also know that we are passionate about our commitment to serve people who are sick and vulnerable; that we are grounded in a tradition of compassionate service that recognizes and respects the dignity of each person; and that we are rooted in a call to be God's healing love in this hurting world.

The law of the great Iroquois people states that in every deliberation the impact on the seventh generation must be considered. Just imagine if we all lived by that mandate. As we embark on this next 100 years, let us commit ourselves to ensure a future that is better than the past. Let us work together to create a just and equitable health care system that will serve well beyond the needs of our day. Let us build upon the great legacy of Catholic health care and strive for an inheritable gift not just for the next generation but for those to come.

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