

DESTINATION FOR THE JOURNEY

The theme of this issue of *Health Progress* centers on the future of Catholic health care in an era of health reform. It is important in the health ministry across the country to keep in mind that CHA's vision statement was created collectively — and in a time when the passage of health reform legislation was uncertain.



**ELAINE
BAUER**

The origin of the word vision is from the Latin *vision-*, *visio*, from *videre*: “to see.” There are half a dozen definitions of the word when it is used as a noun; the two most applicable to CHA's Vision 2020 is “a mental image produced by the imagination,” and “unusual competence in discernment or perception — intelligent foresight.” A vision statement is sometimes called

a picture of an organization, but it should be our inspiration — the framework for how we develop our ministry over the next decade. It helps us answer the question, “Where do we want to go?”

While components of the health reform legislation have the potential to make it easier or more financially affordable to achieve some of the elements of Vision 2020, we need to commit ourselves to achieving them all apart from governmental actions. The vision statement provides the destination for the journey. It will come to be only through the actions of each ministry in its local community. As you read through Vision 2020, do you see how your ministry can collaborate with other ministries of the church in your community to identify the vulnerable and meet their needs? Can you picture developing innovative programs and services that change the way health care is delivered and needs are met? Can you imagine how those who are served by your organization might feel if all who serve have experienced ministry formation?

How might Catholic health ministry be different by 2020 if we share best practices, innovative ideas and collaborate on programs and services regionally at first, and then perhaps nationally? How might our Catholic identity be strengthened

through our relationships with one another and the church?

Each of us in Catholic health ministry has an important role to play in achieving our Vision 2020. We need to talk about it, not just once but a lot! We have to make the vision statement physically prominent so that we can be reminded of it often. We need to bring it to our sponsors, our boards and our management teams. We need to use it when we do our own organization's visioning

and strategic planning. We need to constantly ask ourselves, “Is what we're doing (or about to do) consistent with our vision?” We need to challenge ourselves to think outside the cocoon of our own communities about how what we are doing might be helpful to others and how we can share what we are doing with them.

We need to keep in mind the opening statement of Vision 2020 which says “Inspired by the Gospel and grounded in our beliefs and values, the Catholic health ministry will serve as a compass to guide our nation through the complexities of an evolving health care system.” Our vision statement does not have health reform legislation as a prerequisite. We are living and working in a time of change in U.S. health care. The Catholic health ministry is well positioned to be that compass, helping to pave the way for a health care system that operates in a manner consistent with our gospel values.

ELAINE BAUER, M.A., FACHE, is vice president, strategic initiatives, Catholic Health Association, Washington, D.C. Write to her at ebauer@chausa.org.



JOURNAL OF THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

www.chausa.org

HEALTH PROGRESS®

Reprinted from *Health Progress*, March-April 2011
Copyright © 2011 by The Catholic Health Association of the United States
