



1119 K STREET, 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95814  
T: (916) 313-4000  
F: (916) 313-4066  
[www.cacatholic.org](http://www.cacatholic.org)

For Release:

August 1, 2018

Contact:

Steve Pehanich, California Catholic Conference  
916-313-4000

Brian Reardon, Catholic Health Association  
314-253-3506

Lori Dangberg, Alliance for Catholic Health Care  
916-552-2630

**PARTNERSHIP AIMS TO TRANSFORM HOW  
CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE, PARISHES CARE FOR THE SICK AND DYING**

SACRAMENTO, CA, and WASHINGTON, DC - The Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the Catholic bishops of California, Providence St. Joseph Health and Dignity Health have entered into a groundbreaking national partnership to develop quality palliative care programs that support and accompany the chronically and terminally ill in both clinical and parish settings.

The Whole Person Care Initiative (WPCI) will work with Catholic health care professionals, clinicians, community partners, clergy, volunteers and other ministry leaders to expand or initiate programs and practices aimed at bringing the love, care, and support all of us need during our illnesses. The Initiative will promote conversations among families, clinicians and spiritual mentors aimed at helping people determine their hopes, desires and health care preferences, particularly when confronted by a terminal diagnosis.

“The Whole Person Care Initiative has great potential for the future,” said Sr. Carol Keehan, DC, president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, “not only for our parishes, our hospitals, our visiting nurse programs but also for our seminarians, deacons and parish volunteers. The Initiative will help them better understand Church teachings on the end of life, so when they minister to the chronically and terminally ill they are able to convey very competently and compassionately the Church's teaching, as well as the availability of clinical and community-based palliative care programs.”

“During his earthly ministry, Jesus healed people body, mind and spirit,” said the Most Reverend Jaime Soto, bishop of Sacramento and president of the California Catholic Conference. “Jesus sought to restore people to wholeness and his followers have always followed his example. The Whole Person Care Initiative will reinvigorate our faith communities as they minister to those facing serious illness and very much in need of support from their brothers and sisters.”

The partnership will develop and demonstrate WPCI principles and practices in a “proof-of-concept” program in California with the intention of making the Initiative available to Church and Catholic health care leaders in other areas of the United States. Under the leadership of CHA, a National Advisory

Council (NAC), composed of representatives from the California WPCI, bishops, Catholic health care systems, partner organizations such as the Supportive Care Coalition, and others, will focus on promoting and adapting the concepts elsewhere. The NAC will also provide strategic and technical advice as the Initiative is refined in California. It will then become the national repository of WPCI knowledge and best practices.

The Whole Person Care Initiative has been in development for more than two years under the direction of California Catholic health care leaders and the bishops in California, following the legalization of physician-assisted suicide in California. Ministry leaders from California's dioceses and its two Catholic health care systems – Providence St. Joseph Health and Dignity Health – have been developing and expanding their collaborative efforts. Together, they are promoting a better appreciation of Catholic wisdom on the end of life, teaching patients what to expect and for what to ask in clinical settings. They will develop new programs where needed and enhance existing programs already providing caring support for the sick and bereaved.

Funding from CHA, with matching contributions from Dignity Health and Providence St. Joseph Health, will be used to develop training programs, resource materials and a best-practices repository that will be scalable and replicable in other states. Catholic health institutions have long been leaders in caring for the very ill and dying and are uniquely positioned to excel in this work especially among many underserved communities.

“We help patients throughout life's sacred journey. That means supporting them mind, body, and soul,” said Lloyd Dean, Dignity Health President and CEO. “This collaboration will create the pathways needed to support whole patient care and well-being.”

“Care for the incurably ill remains one of the most broken parts of the U.S. health system. By sharing best practices and strengthening palliative care in the clinical setting, we can dramatically improve the experience and quality of life for patients in their final years. But clinicians can't do it alone. It will take all of us working together– the dioceses, parishes and other community partners and social services agencies – to help people live the best possible life in whatever time they have ahead,” said Rod Hochman, M.D., President and CEO of Providence St. Joseph Health.

Over the next five years, the Whole Person Care Initiative will be assimilated into all clinical and pastoral settings in California, even as it is developed in other parts of the United States. The Initiative's goal is to help transform the way in which society cares for the chronically and terminally ill.

###