

# UPDATE ON THE FRAMEWORK FOR MINISTRY FORMATION AND NEW ONLINE RESOURCES

Ministry formation creates experiences that invite those who serve in Catholic health care to discover connections between personal meaning and organizational purpose. These connections inspire and enable participants to articulate, integrate and implement the foundational elements of Catholic health ministry so that it flourishes now and into the future.



DIARMUID ROONEY

Considerable progress has occurred since representatives from CHA's membership initially gathered to create the shared definition of ministry formation and chose the six foundational elements to encapsulate the fundamental concerns that formation needs to address: vocation, tradition, spirituality, ethics, Catholic social teaching and discernment.

Since then, we have continued to work to complete the new Framework for Ministry Formation resource, all 57 pages of it. Copies are available in the CHA online store. The comprehensive guide addresses the key areas of a robust formation program:

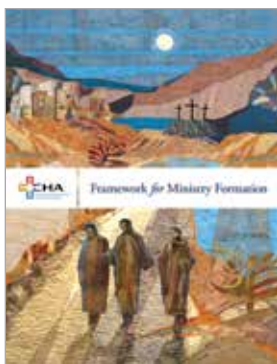
- Formation definition and essential elements;
- Formation process and pedagogical considerations;
- Formation session planning, including downloadable templates;
- Formation content for each element, from frontline associates to governance;
- Formation competencies for ministry formation leaders.

In light of the growing recognition of the importance of formation to the future of Catholic health care, a new focus area for Ministry Formation has been designed and added to the front pages of CHA's website, [chausa.org](http://chausa.org). The new

area replaces the previous Leadership Formation webpages. It serves as the gateway to expanded resources and interactive elements through a new online formation platform.

This robust formation resource and repository enables our members to simply click on a Foundational Element (for example, Vocation). That will lead to information about all the identified stakeholders and will display content and processes needed to deliver the best formation experience, including presentations, CHA articles, documents, videos, podcasts, prayers, reflections and more.

The stakeholder materials are for frontline associates, managers, supervisors, clinicians, directors, executives, governance, boards and sponsors. The diagram below highlights the depth and detail of the new site. (See **Diagram 1**, next page.)



The Formation platform incorporates an integrated learning management system that is frequently updated in light of members' needs. It currently houses three formation programs, including the newly designed *Online Foundations for Catholic Health Care Leaders*. Nearly 200 members have registered for

the program in the last two years, a 40% annual increase over prior years. This suggests the effectiveness of a blended learning adult education model for formation, emphasizing personal experience combined with professional integration and practical application, supported by effective interactive technology.<sup>1</sup>

Diagram 1



This specific formational approach is reflected in the new CHA Formation Session Planning Template. (See **Diagram 2** below.)

The desired outcome is for associates to reflect on organizational purpose (the content/knowledge process) and how it aligns with their personal understanding and experience (the integration process). The next step is crucial — how participants are personally and professionally implementing their learnings (the application process) while practicing the core competencies of formation: articulation and integration. As the Formation Competencies (outlined in the Frame-

work) describe, good pedagogical practices are always dependent on formation leaders and their presentation, facilitation and design skills that take into account the pedagogical flow.<sup>2</sup>

To achieve the desired outcomes of formation, it is critical for those engaged in formation to be attentive to these distinct but intertwined aspects of content, integration and application.<sup>3</sup> Each of these aspects is essential; authentic application is a critical indicator of the personal and organizational transformation expected from the formation process:

Diagram 2

## FRAMEWORK FOR MINISTRY FORMATION

# Formation Session Template

<b>DESIRED RESULTS</b>		
<b>CONTENT</b>	<b>INTEGRATION</b>	<b>APPLICATION</b>
What knowledge and curriculum are critical to deepen participant understanding?	What reflection questions will deepen participant awareness, internalization and conviction?	What behaviors, habits, expressions, etc., bring the concept to life in concrete ways?

**Content:** Assure that associates encounter relevant materials that uncover essential knowledge in interactive dialogues;

**Integration:** Facilitate the gradual alignment and deepening of personal dispositions and values with the foundational commitments of the ministry;

**Application:** Authentically speak and act in ways that sustain the identity and tradition of Catholic health care while transforming it anew into the future.

There are ways formation can be assessed to assure and track these movements as they are occurring.<sup>4</sup> Session evaluations can be specifically structured to highlight these components. Moreover, 360° personal development plans should all have formation components built into them explicitly, and ideally performance evaluations should also have components built in (and be linked to incentives and compensation). Built-in accountability that happens between or after sessions, through virtual reporting or coaching/dialogue partners, is critical. This is not simply for return on investment, but for the habitual reinforcement of personal responsibility for local and organizational cultural transformation. Hard-wiring and cascading formation practices are essential keys to the future of the ministry, as formation ultimately enables associates to articulate and integrate the knowledge, spirituality and inward dispositions necessary to demonstrate and advance the healing mission of Catholic health care. (Cascading formation practices is a particular approach that allows formation to flow throughout an organization.)

As we engage diverse communities of associ-

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#### **The Framework for Ministry Formation**

is available in the CHA Store: <https://www.chausa.org/store/storefront>.

The new Formation online learning platform has launched.

Upcoming issues of *Health Progress* will include articles written in collaboration with theologian John (Jack) Shea on the Foundational Elements: Content, Integration and Application.

ates in spiritual reflection, we take to heart the phrase from Psalm 42:7, “deep calls unto deep.” We honor our associates by providing them ways to reflect on the journey, story and depth of their own faith commitments or life philosophy. “By introducing them to the riches of the Catholic spiritual tradition and practices that compel and continue to sustain Catholic health care and inviting their participation, we enable the depth of who we are organizationally to speak to the depth of who they are as individuals. This dialogue is profoundly sacred and consistently evokes mutual respect, inclusion and oneness-in-diversity.”<sup>5</sup>

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#### **NOTES**

1. The learning management system, or LMS, allows for online pre-work, moderated group/forum meetings and shared learnings between sessions, as well as a post-session integration questions around personal and professional learnings and practical applications. The LMS also offers additional resources and opportunities for formation, learning experiences and ongoing professional development. An intentional formational “weaving” of all sessions, face-to-face (when possible) and virtually, has also helped deliver an excellent user experience. The program and LMS are being carefully monitored and evaluated for continued development and improvement.
2. It is essential to emphasize that as a ministry we need to make sure we are creating the necessary training and pipeline of personnel to engage in the art of formation — to continue embedding the connections between personal meaning and organizational purpose.
3. This foundational component of the framework, the Formation Session Planning Pedagogy, has been converted into an electronic fillable document, available for members to download from the CHA website.
4. Currently an Advisory Metrics subcommittee is working on formation metrics tools for members that will prove invaluable as this new discipline evolves. There is a lot more to be said on this subject, from hiring-for-fit, to the role of sponsor in ensuring formation at all levels of the ministry.
5. Celeste Mueller, Ministry Formation Advisory Committee member, from information submitted as part of a committee member review.

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