



## ANNUAL REPORT

April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 – March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021

As President and Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Health Partners Inc. I am very pleased to present the Annual Report of Corporation activities over the past year.

The major world pandemic of COVID-19 has impacted on the work in all of our Sponsored facilities and in our work here at headquarters. However, we at Catholic Health Partners Inc. (Catholic Health International) continue to dedicate ourselves and all those we touch to our mission: ***Perpetuating the Health Ministry of Jesus in the Spirit of the Founding Sisters***. Building stronger communities with our programs and services generated through our Centre for Excellence in Leadership, provides us with tools to continue to advocate for the vulnerable and the disadvantaged.

A year of virtual meetings was put to our advantage in bringing us closer to those who work in the facilities and on the front lines. It enabled us to attend more Board of Directors meetings throughout the year and to provide education opportunities that were not possible in the past. We have seen a marked increase in the number of front line workers attending these education sessions. So we have put the disadvantages of COVID to our advantage.

Dealing with the pandemic presented a rather challenging year for us. As we end this year and begin a new one, we remain faced with this continuing major world dilemma. The front line health care providers in all of our facilities were exemplary in their dedication and commitment driven by our mission. The staff have shown great strength and determination with complete dedication to serving the needs of our population. We are comforted this year that vaccines are being distributed in great numbers and have proven, so far, to be very effective giving all of us light at the end of the tunnel. We are truly Blessed with exceptional people.

We have had to stop, reflect, plan to more effectively move catholic health care forward working in harmony with the other Public Juridic Persons across Canada and the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada. We continue to have excellent working relationships with the provincial and local governments and more particularly the Region Health Authorities. New Health Authority Boards in the province of New Brunswick will be elected or appointed this coming year. We are hopeful

that our nominations will be accepted. We hold a Catholic seat on each of the Authorities, which is unique in Canada. We have also begun negotiations with the provincial government to renew our operating agreement which has been in place for twenty-nine years and is due for renewal in 2022. So far the negotiations have been very positive. We meet or converse with the local Bishops in each of the eleven Diocese in which we operate, at least annually, providing them with a copy of our Annual Report and our submission to the Holy See.

The **CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP** this very important educational tool continues to bring new life into our organization. The following will highlight a few of the activities within the Centre's five pillars:

### **Ethics Pillar**

This year Bill C-7, a Federal Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), became law on March 17, 2021 after some delay because of Covid-19. It did include removal of the requirements for a person's natural death to be reasonably foreseeable in order to be eligible for MAiD. Over the next year, an expert panel review will take place to recommend "protocols, guidance, and safeguards to apply to requests for MAiD by persons whose sole underlying condition is a mental illness." It also now allows for only one witness, rather than two, to sign patient request. The other significant change is that for those whose death is reasonably foreseeable the 10-day reflection period has been removed. Over the year Catholic Health Alliance of Canada (CHAC) Ethicists, Canadian Bishops and others have been exploring how these changes will affect Catholic healthcare and healthcare in general. The CHAC Governing Council continues to be the liaison between the Bishops and Catholic healthcare as we continue to stand for our position of not providing MAiD in our facilities. We are represented on the Governing Council.

Due to Covid -19 the CHAC ethicist network meet by zoom on a biweekly basis. These hour long meetings have been invaluable to the participants. They have allowed members to share many resources and the group has had many in depth conversations about how to best respond to the many different challenges that have arisen during this time. Dr. Hazel Markwell, the CHAC's Ethics and Policy Advisor, has organized these meetings and has led the work of the group. A significant result of these consultations was the development of several "papers" intended to be shared in Catholic facilities across the country related to Covid 19 issues. The group prepared papers on the following issues: *Triage in the Context of Covid 19*, *Moral Distress*, *Visitor Restrictions and Limitations during COVID-19*, *Duty to Provide Care*, *Ethical Considerations in the Care and Treatment of Seniors in Long Term Care*, and *Ethical Issues Concerning Vaccines*. These papers were sent to our Catholic Health International facilities as well as made available on our CHI website. David Levangie, our Vice-President Communications and Professional Development as well as Rev. Dr. Neil Elford, in his role as Director of Spiritual Health, Ethics and Mission at Hotel Dieu Hospital in Kingston, Ontario were regular participants in the CHAC Ethicist Network.

The CHI Ethics pillar continued to meet regularly during the year. The committee members shared concerns from their facilities and shared resources that were brought back by other members to their own facility ethics committees. The group discussed many issues including “presumed consent” for organ donation as new legislation was introduced in Nova Scotia that the members feel would be beneficial across the country. An in depth discussion of vaccine hesitancy with a PowerPoint presentation by Dr. Maya Goldenberg, an Associate Professor of the Department of Philosophy at University of Guelph was shared. This presentation was also reviewed by several Ethics committees at CHI facilities as it explored ways to respectfully encourage those who have vaccine hesitancy to consider getting vaccinated.

Over the year our individual CHI facilities have contacted our office for an ethical consult. These consultations were on a variety of topics and often involved discussions at our Ethics pillar meetings or private discussions. From time to time other CHAC Ethicists were contacted to explore the best option for moving forward in often difficult situations. During the year the team at Aspirus Langlade Hospital in Antigo Wisconsin, in the United States were involved in a significant review of their ethical practices through an audit by the National Catholic Bioethics. Sean Joyce Whipp, Director of Mission, and then President Andy Barth are to be commended for their work on this very demanding project.

### **Spiritual and Religious Care Pillar**

The Spiritual and Religious Care pillar added a new member this year, Robert Gordon, D.Min., Director of Mission and Pastoral Care at St. Bernard Hospital in Chicago. Chaplain Gordon had previously served on the Mission pillar and we are pleased that he has brought his expertise to the Spiritual and Religious Care pillar.

The committee continues to explore ways in which to improve access to Spiritual Health services within our CHI facilities. During the year CHI Senior Management has had discussions with Rev. Denis Belliveau, Regional Coordinator of Spiritual Care for the Vitalité Health Network, as well as member of the Spiritual Care pillar, related to this issue. These conversations have focused on how CHI could adapt some of the spiritual care education programs that Fr. Belliveau has used in New Brunswick for other CHI facilities. This is part of a larger conversation CHI is having in preparation for our Strategic Planning in the Fall of 2021.

Spiritualité Santé in Quebec announced this past year that they would no longer be producing printed material for World Day of the Sick celebrations on February 11<sup>th</sup>. We at Catholic Health International took this as an opportunity to commission its own posters for use in our facilities and to share them with our partners in Catholic healthcare ministry. Posters were also shared with our Founding Congregations, Bishops in the Diocese where CHI has facilities and to the other Sponsors of Catholic healthcare in Canada.

### **Mission Pillar**

There were significant changes in the membership of the Mission pillar over the past year. Bonnie Ruest was been appointed chairperson of this committee in October.

During the year the Catholic Health Association of the United States released a revised version of their *Mission Leader Competency Model*. This is a very significant document with aspirational goals for mission leaders. It identifies personal qualifications and general leadership skills as well as the overall competencies for mission leaders. This document will be used as guidance for the pillar and our facilities.

Catholic Health International was also very involved in the CHAC led celebration of National Catholic Health Care Week which was held October 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>. This was the second year of this national initiative. Many CHI facilities were actively involved in the week despite it being impossible to organize group activities during Covid-19. Some of the Bishops in dioceses where CHI sponsored facilities are located participated as well. Preparation of the material for the week was led by the CHAC Proclaim Task Force which includes representation of CHI. It is our hope that the 2021 celebration (October 2<sup>nd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>) will be even more successful.

### **Values Integration Assessment Pillar**

Due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, all site visits for the Values Integration Assessment process were put on hold. Once these restrictions are lifted our next visit will be to New London, Wisconsin (St. Joseph Residence & The Washington Center) which will then complete the first VIA visits for all our facilities. We will then begin to visit our facilities for the second time.

### **Leadership Pillar**

During the year, plans for Leadership Formation were updated during the pandemic. The group was also advised of an Alumni education session and the CHAC annual conference. The committee was made aware of the leadership resources available to them on the CHI website. Heather Oakley, Director of Education Services participated in the Catholic Health Association United States (CHAUS) Leadership Formation Program. It was a great opportunity to network with Catholic Health leaders in the US, learn new material and resources as well as evaluate virtual course delivery.

### **Formation Program**

The second session of the English program that was to be held in Montreal in the spring of 2021 was postponed. With the number of COVID 19 cases, vaccination rates, and the challenges with international travel, it was considered to be too great a risk for our participants and speakers. This session will be rescheduled for the spring of 2022. The French Leadership Program which was to be held in June 2021 was also rescheduled to September 2021. Both courses are full at this time and we are accepting French and English registrations for 2022.

## Alumni

CHI held 2 successful virtual workshops (one in French and one in English) led by Michel Drisdelle for our Alumni. The workshop titled *Compassion Fatigue: There are other options*, spoke to the challenges we face in health care during a pandemic, resiliency and how to care for self. The post workshop evaluation was very positive.

Education continues to be a priority at all levels. We place strong importance on the education of leadership at all levels. Some of the initiatives include:

- Leadership Council meetings held twice per year – This year because of COVID -19 these sessions were held virtually and were very successful.
- A Plenary session held every two years in Montreal for Board Chairs, CEOs, CHI Board and CHI Staff. The next planned for Spring 2022.
- Continued provision of the Catholic Healthcare Leadership Program in both official languages.
- The alumni made up of the graduates of the Catholic Leadership Program – growing annually.
- Missioning ceremonies held in many facilities over the past year and will continue each year.
- A new CEO evaluation process has been developed and implemented.
- A new Board member self-evaluation has been developed and implemented.
- CHI together with the Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick offers eight (8) scholarship valued at \$1,000. each to a Catholic student studying in the health care field. These scholarships are available for both English and French students.
- CHI studying the possibility of expanding the scholarship program.
- CHI offers an advanced scholarship to a health care worker employed within the CHI Health System to assist in completing a Masters of Doctoral program.

There remains an inherent need within our organization to remain true to the legacy of the founding Sisters by encouraging collaboration to make the needs of those most vulnerable an integral part of our works. We had planned to update our booklet *“Priority One – Serving the Vulnerable”*. Programs of support for the vulnerable continue to be a major focus of our operations. This was delayed due to COVID

Integration has been a constant in many locations over the past few years. We continue to study opportunities for integration, partnership or alliance in various areas generated in some cases by financial opportunities while always with a focus on the patient/resident and how we can best serve the population of the area.

A major Strategic Planning session scheduled for the Fall of 2020 had to be delayed until the Fall of 2021, again due to the pandemic. In the meantime, the Board held a virtual mini retreat to prepare for the major face-to-face retreat indicating a number of programs and services they would like to address. The Senior Executive Team has been working on preparing background materials for the board in the subject areas they requested. Included in the material will be proposals for restructuring the Board of Directors, Spiritual Care initiatives, new and innovating ideas thinking outside the box while at the same time honoring and enhancing the legacy of the Founding Sisters and in keeping with our mission.

Our monthly newsletter “The Torch” has taken on a new look. David Levangie, Vice-President Communications/Professional Development continues to develop a new communications plan which will include communications technology to permit virtual meetings; revision and upgrade of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership; and a close working relationship with Education Services.

The Board of Directors of Catholic Health International continues to meet regularly throughout the year, as required by the By-Laws, to address requests, issues and/or concerns of the various sponsored corporations. The format of the meetings is currently being changed to make the meeting more efficient and effective enabling a faster return to the Corporations. Under the guidance of Eileen Bowes, CHI Vice-President, Governance and Operations, many of our Accountability documents were revised during the year for ease of completion by the facilities and contribute to a much better understanding of our purpose while at the same time adhering to the mission and sound moral principles and teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

At each meeting of the Board of Directors, an environmental scan was presented which outlined for the Board members a clear picture of activities related to governance and operations in each of our Sponsored facilities across the system.

Policies were reviewed and where required revised in keeping with our Strategic Plan.

World Day of the Sick, celebrated on February 11<sup>th</sup>, was promoted in all our facilities. Catholic Health International supplied printed materials, in both official languages, including posters, cards, and suggested prayers. These materials were also sent to a number of secular facilities, the Bishops and Religious Institutes.

The “**Volunteer Excellence Award**” continues to be available to each facility, awarded by Catholic Health International, to a volunteer selected within each facility who has an outstanding record of volunteerism. An Awards Committee has been appointed and is reviewing all awards to ensure they are effective and promoted.

Catholic Health International continues to be a full partner in the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada (CHAC) including representation on the Board of Governors. CHI also financially supports the national ethics program along with the other Sponsors in Canada and the CHAC. CHI in partnership with our Religious Institutes continues to be a Gold sponsor of the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada National Conference.

Catholic Health International continues to be a partner in the Ontario Alliance of Sponsors (OAS). Meetings are held on a monthly basis to deal with issues involving Catholic Health care in the Province of Ontario and issues arising across Canada which could impact the delivery of Catholic Healthcare in Ontario. Major restructuring of the Ontario Health Care system is presently taking place and the OAS is monitoring the changes to determine the impact on Catholic health care.

Nothing gets accomplished in an organization of our size without the complete dedication, commitment, and tireless energy of our staff. They simply are exceptional and devote all of their time and energy to ensure that the demands of their individual positions and the direction of the organization is in keeping with our mission. A very special thank you to each and every one of them.

Catholic Health care administrators work in an immense challenging operational and financial environment. COVID-19 has presented all of our facilities including managers and front line staff with extreme challenges. Their commitment and dedication to our values of dignity of the person, compassion and respect cannot be overemphasized. The work of these people and first responders is truly amazing always respecting and driven by the mission of the facility. They are all to be congratulated.

Catholic healthcare continues to be an essential ministry of the Catholic Church. We must emphasize human dignity and social justice as we create healthier communities across our system addressing the needs of the vulnerable and marginalized. We are more than caretakers of this wonderful ministry – we are bearers of a tradition of service and ethical reflection. We are Church!

Respectfully

Robert B. Stewart, PhD  
President and Chief Executive Officer.