

ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF NEW BRUNSWICK

2019-2020

INTRODUCTION:

The Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick, established in 1986 is an association of Catholic Hospitals and Nursing Homes in New Brunswick with an invitation to other Catholic facilities in Atlantic Canada to join. Other health care facilities which maintain the same mission and values are also invited and encouraged to join.

The Association now operates in cooperation with Catholic Health International and acts as the voice for Christian healthcare, in the Catholic tradition, in the Atlantic area. The mission of the association has been promoted for over 33 years.

This year, COVID 19 presented a major obstacle for the operation of the Board and its face to face meetings. This year meetings were held via an electronic means, either by video or teleconference. The Board of Directors met during the year, as required, and responded to the work of the various committees staffed by a number of dedicated volunteers.

The following is a summary of the various activities:

The established *Centre for Excellence In Leadership* housed and operated by Catholic Health International continues to be the main contributor to the work of the committees with the Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick in areas of the five major pillars: Ethic, Spiritual & Religious Care, Catholic Healthcare Leadership, Mission Development, and Values.

ETHICS

It was a very busy year in Catholic healthcare ethics throughout the country and in New Brunswick. Early in the past year the focus of discussions in Canada was Medical Assistance in Dying (Physician Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia). In February the federal government introduced proposed legislation which includes the following: 1. removal of the requirements for a person's natural death to be reasonably foreseeable in order to be eligible for MAiD, 2. excluding eligibility for individuals suffering solely from mental illness and 3. allowing waiver of final consent for eligible person whose natural death is reasonably foreseeable and who may lose capacity to consent before MAiD can be provided. Should these changes become law it could have a significant effect on our facilities. This legislation is presently on hold due to COVID-19. The CHAC Governing Council is developing materials for its members to use regarding advocacy for CHAC's position on MAiD.

As part of ongoing support to our facilities in the area of ethics, with input from CHI's Ethics pillar members, an ethics poster was developed as an information tool on how to access ethics services. The CHI Ethics Decision Making Model along with several copies of the poster were sent to each of our CHANB facilities for their use.

The CHAC ethicist network was very active during the year and has been working on a number of initiatives. In addition to regular discussions regarding MAiD the Network has been working on three

particular areas; (1) “expanding the role of the Health Ethics Network,” (2) an “ethicist training and development roadmap” and (3) the “essential competencies for ethicists in Catholic health care.” There are many options being considered and this work is being shared with the CHAC Governing Council for their input and decision. As part of this work the CHAC’s *Ethics Capacity in Catholic Health – Recommendations Report* was forwarded to all CHANB facilities for their review and discussion at the Board/Advisory level. Another project that has been promoted by the Ethicists Network and the CHAC Governing Council is the Saint Paul University Catholic Bioethics Graduate Diploma. This project is led by Dr. Hazel Markwell, the CHAC’s Ethics and Policy Advisory, and CHI is exploring ways of supporting this program.

In February, the Ethics Pillar welcomed Lise Guerrette-Daigle as the CHI Board representative as the two previous Board representatives have retired. The pillar is now reviewing ethics issues that arise in our facilities to keep track of any issues that may require further attention. In March, because of Covid-19, we put our meetings on hold. We knew from our members that their own schedules were filled with meetings regarding the pandemic and we did not want to tax them any further. We have added a section to the CHI website related to Covid-19 with a link on our CHANB website. It includes material on a variety of pandemic related issues from the CHAC, the CHA-USA, the Hastings Centre, the Federal government, provincial governments, and health authorities.

With Covid-19 it was clear that the CHAC Ethicists Network would benefit from meeting regularly to share what was happening in their own provinces. These meetings have continued on a weekly and bi-weekly basis and are a source of great information and idea sharing. The members are developing short information sheets on different aspects of Covid-19 and ethical issues. These information sheets are made available to our facilities on our website.

Spiritual and Religious Care

During the year the Spiritual and Religious Care pillar continued its review of the needs in spiritual care in our facilities. The focus has been on the underserved facilities in New Brunswick, especially in the Francophone communities, where the most need was identified. Working with the New Brunswick Spiritual Health Network funding for new positions in the regional hospitals in Vitalité has been secured. We continue our efforts to expand those resources to go beyond the Regional Hospitals into the smaller communities. The Spiritual and Religious Care pillar has identified the difficult problem of trying to support the spiritual care volunteers, who are working in many of our facilities, with the desire to have funded clinically trained spiritual care specialists providing care. The New Brunswick Spiritual Health Network continues to help fund clinical pastoral education in the province and CHI has been exploring the possibilities for further training for spiritual care volunteers.

One of the options being explored is a video based training program out of Australia for spiritual care volunteers in Long Term Care facilities. It is called “Spiritual Care Series” (www.alturlearning.com/spiritual-care-series). We are also looking for other training programs that might be of assistance to our facilities, particularly bilingual resources.

This pillar also postponed our meetings in March because of Covid-19. Members of the pillar have been active in finding creative ways of keeping patients/residents connected to their families and loved ones during this time.

Mission Pillar

The main focus this past year in the area of mission has been on the CHAC's AWAKEN Project and more particularly the new National Catholic Health Care Week which was celebrated October 6 to 12, 2019. The Mission Pillar reviewed the documents that the CHAC prepared and gave feedback to the CHI staff so we could adapt it for use with our CHI/CHANB facilities. The material prepared included a video, many social media prepared messages for Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as well as a listing of possible ways to celebrate the week. These were adapted for our facilities and shared with them. Several of our facilities celebrated the week this past year and are looking forward to more opportunities this year as they become more familiar with the week. The week is planned for October 4 to 10, 2020.

Values Integration Assessment Pillar

In June 2019 St. Joseph's Hospital in Saint John had a successful site visit. Claire Savoie (Bathurst, NB) and Lucie Lombardo (Windsor, ON) were the Assessors and worked with Kathi Hurley, Facility Manager and Jean Marie Dionne, Local Coordinator on the process. In October 2019 Claire Savoie and Jean Marie Dionne were the assessors at Les Oeuvres de l'Hôtel-Dieu Saint-Joseph in Saint-Basile, with Manon Soucy as the Local Coordinator. This was another successful visit.

At recent pillar meetings the members have been reviewing the Final Report from the most recent surveys. The committee particularly reviewed the suggestions for growth sections of the report and will forward suggestions to the appropriate pillar for review and action. The pillar sees the new resources section of the CHI website as a way to share some of the programs developed from the VIA process with other facilities. With the Covid-19 travel restrictions in place, all VIA visits are now on hold.

RECOGNITION OF RELIGIOUS

Work was completed during the year on the sculpture to recognize Religious who provided services in Healthcare, Education, and Social services in the past. The sculpture was installed at a site in Fredericton and was unveiled in the Fall of 2019. The sculpture was Blessed by Archbishop Valerie Vienneau of Moncton. Invitations were sent to all Religious Orders in the province with a good number attending. This was followed by a reception in Fredericton. This project had been in the works for many years with thanks going to all who worked to make this a reality, in particular our sponsor – Catholic Health International for providing the funds to make this happen.

ADVOCACY

During the year the Association, through its membership, continued its advocacy on programs which were of concern or were being promoted. Meetings were held regularly with the President and CEO of both the Horizon Health Network and Vitalite Health Network, the Bishops of New Brunswick, the government of New Brunswick through the Premier's office, Health and Social Development offices, and the Federal Government through its many Members of Parliament.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Board of Directors continues with its five (5) year strategic plan prepared in 2015 and expiring in 2020. Because of COVID19 the Board will be setting a date for the next strategic planning retreat to prepare for the next five (5) years following a CHI Board retreat planned for the Spring of 2021.

GOVERNANCE/OTHER

The Advisory Chair Council meets on a regular basis. The nomination committee met as required and will be presenting its report at the annual meeting.

FINANCIAL

The Association continues to operate in a fiscally responsible manner. The Association is presently consolidating its banking services into one location.

THANK YOU

A special thank you, to all CHANB members, volunteers, and others for your continued support in these challenging times. A very special thank you to the Board of Directors for their dedication, encouragement and support.

Lise Guerrette Daigle
Chairperson



Robert B. Stewart
Executive Director

