

# ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

## CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF NEW BRUNSWICK

### 2020-2021

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick was established in 1986 is an association of Catholic Hospitals, Nursing Homes in in Atlantic Canada. Other catholic entities which maintain the same mission and values are also invited and encouraged to join.

The Association 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 35 years.

Again this year, meetings were held via Zoom or by 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**

This year Bill C-7, An 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 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.

Due to Covid -19 the CHAC ethicist network continued to 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 Advisory, 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 in New Brunswick and 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 CHANB/CHI facilities as well as made available on our CHI website. David Levangie is a member of 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 CHANB and CHI facilities have contacted CHI for an ethical consult. These consultations were on a variety of topics and often involved discussions at our Ethics pillar meetings or private discussions with David Levangie. From time to time other CHAC Ethicists were contacted to explore the best option for moving forward in often difficult situations.

### **Spiritual and Religious Care**

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 the 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 producing printed material for World Day of the Sick celebrations on February 11<sup>th</sup>. CHI took this as an opportunity to commission its own posters for use in our CHANB/CHI facilities and to share them with our partners in Catholic healthcare ministry. Posters were shared with our Founding Congregations, Bishops in the Diocese where CHI has facilities, many health care facilities in New Brunswick 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. As mentioned Bob Gordon, moved from the Mission pillar to the Spiritual Care pillar. Sr. Evangeline Poirier retired from her role in Mission at Villa St. Joseph du Lac and therefore retired from this committee. Sean Joyce Whipp, Director of Mission at Aspirus Langlade Hospital, Sister Thérèse Belliveau ndsc, from Moncton, and Rick Atkinson, CEO of Villa St. Joseph du Lac, all joined the committee. Bonnie Ruest has taken over the role as 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.

CHI 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 CHANB/CHI facilities were actively involved in the week despite it being impossible to organize group activities during Covid-19. Some of the Bishops in diocese 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 by 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, Heather Oakley, Director of Education Services, updated the committee of plans for Leadership Formation 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 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 Tracadie in

June 2021 was also rescheduled to September 2021. All speakers and participants for this session are from within New Brunswick thus there will be no travel required from outside the province. 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 which included many participants from our New Brunswick facilities. 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 the self. The post workshop evaluation was very positive.

We sincerely thank the Board of Directors, CHI Staff, volunteers and all who have contributed to the Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick during the past year.

Lise Guerrette Daigle  
Chairperson



Robert B. Stewart  
Executive Director

