

**CHAIR/CEO ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES
CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF NEW BRUNSWICK
2021-2022**

INTRODUCTION:

The Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick established in 1986 is an association of Catholic Hospitals, Nursing Homes in Atlantic Canada. Other catholic entities which maintain or support our 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 36 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. Again, we were unable to hold our Annual Conference and this year again we will hold a virtual Annual Meeting. We continue to look at the possibility of a hybrid Annual Conference, however, we are exploring opportunities to provide virtual education sessions.

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. This work has been curtailed somewhat due to the pandemic.

ETHICS

Covid-19 and Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) continued to be the two topics that dominated conversation and efforts in Catholic healthcare ethics during the year. The strain on all resources, but especially staff, was overwhelming at times. All staff, our leadership and our Boards/Advisory Committees deserve a great deal of praise for their constant focus on the mission and caring for those most in need at this time.

“Religious Exemptions” from needing vaccination generated a great deal of discussion in many of our facilities.

In light of Covid-19, it was decided to curtail the work of several of our pillars. This was done in order to avoid putting additional strain on our already overworked staff and care workers. Most of our pillar groups were able to have one meeting in the Spring of 2021. It is our hope that the pillars may be able to resume their work in the Fall of 2022.

The Catholic Health Alliance of Canada (CHAC) Ethicists Network continued to explore the impact of Canadian Bill C-7, which became law in March of 2021. Of particular concern is the expanded access to MAiD for mental health patients without pre-existing conditions. This provision is slated to come into effect in March 2023. Dr. Hazel Markwell, as the CHAC ethicist,

has been organizing conversations with Medical Chiefs of Staff and Ethicists across the country. These conversations have looked at the how Bill C-7 might affect transfers of patients for assessments for eligibility for MAiD.

Another significant ethical issue that occupied the CHAC Ethicists Network, those in Communications at Catholic sponsored facilities and the CHAC Governing Council was an article in the Walrus, a Canadian interest magazine, which explored the role of Catholic Healthcare in Canada. It was very critical of Catholic healthcare in general and of specific hospitals across the country. It was expected that other media outlets might pick up the article and give it a wider distribution which did not happen. CHI took this event as an opportunity to explore Catholic Identity in our facilities. CHI sponsored Dr. Christopher De Bono, Executive Director of Mission, Values and Spiritual Care at Unity Health Toronto to lead a workshop with our CEOs on this issue. He chose "Talking about Catholic Health Care: And why it matters" as his theme and this workshop was held in the Spring of 2022.

Catholic Health International continues to sponsor an employee in her studies at St Paul University for the Diploma in Catholic Bioethics. She is currently in the fourth of five courses.

The Ethics Pillar did meet in May and the meeting was highlighted by an excellent presentation by Leesa McNally, part of the Executive Team at St. Joseph's Continuing Care Centre. She shared with the committee a recent workshop by Karima Kanani, a Partner with the law firm of Miller Thomson to the Board and Senior Team at SJCCC. The presentation on "Advancing Diversity and Inclusion: A Governance Perspective" was well received and shared with other CHI facilities.

Consultations are available to our facilities. 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 main focus of those involved in Spiritual and Religious Care in our CHI facilities, once again, was Covid-19. Our Department heads, our denominationally sponsored Chaplains, our Spiritual Care Specialists, as well as those who support them through their volunteer work, were on the front line of caring for patients, residents, clients, their loved ones and the staff. When the CHI Spiritual Care Pillar met in May there was a lengthy discussion of the challenges and changes that health care staff in their facilities face each day. It is clear that this time has been especially difficult for families who have seriously ill loved ones in hospitals and nursing homes. Visitor restrictions on patients/residents is very difficult and often the spiritual care staff, along with other staff, end up having the role of liaison between family/loved ones and the patients/residents. The required facility restrictions and policies with regard to Sacraments, in particular Mass and Communion, have been an additional burden.

The Spiritual Health Network did its best to remain active during these pandemic times. Our representative on the Network reports on a regular basis. The province of New Brunswick did

wide spread consultations on their planned new Health Plan during the year. The Minister of Health asked the Spiritual Health Network to gather spiritual and religious leaders from across the province to be part of those consultations in the Fall of 2021. The issue of funding for spiritual health was the main point of discussion with the Minister.

The Network also completed work on a series of short videos explaining different aspects of Spiritual Health and Clinical Pastoral Education. These videos have been shared with our facilities members and are available in both French (www.vitalitenb.ca/fr/points-de-service/soins-spirituels) and English (<https://horizonnb.ca/patients-visitors/spiritual-and-religious-services/>).

With funding from the province of New Brunswick the Network also organized a virtual conference in November. The webinar, featuring Mario Drouin (from Switzerland), was entitled “The Spiritual Gifts of Aging” and was offered in French with English interpretation. A group of approximately 35 participants joined in, including volunteers, community clergy, and members of the Network. It was very informative for the participants. The Network plans to host similar events in 2023-2024.

World Day of the Sick was celebrated in February and World Earth Day in April. For World Day of the Sick celebration CHI, once again, commissioned their own poster that was used as part of celebrations in our facilities.

MISSION

The Mission Pillar met in the Spring of 2021 taking an in depth look at the Catholic Health Association of the United States’ Mission Leader Competency Model. In this model, the Mission leader competencies are outlined under seven categories (advocacy, catholic identity, strategy, operations, formation, spirituality and ethics). Components of the model are similar to the core elements of CHI’s leadership formation model. The Mission Pillar will use this document for possible future education sessions for those working in mission at our facilities.

One of the CHAC Governing Council’s strategic goals is to develop strong regional programs for mission, ethics and leadership formation. A national collaborative was established representing the 14 sponsors in Canada. This will provide opportunity to share expertise and resources. The collaborative is called “A Pan Canadian Collaborative for Catholic Health Ethics, Formation & Mission Integration” and Heather Oakley, and David Levangie, are to be part of this initiative. With Covid-19 the work of this group has been put on hold for now by the CHAC.

Each year Catholic Health International recognizes the tremendous dedication of volunteers through our Annual Volunteer Excellence Awards. This annual award is presented during National Catholic Healthcare Week and is available to all CHNB Facilities. Each facility chooses a volunteer who demonstrates the spirit of volunteerism, reflects the organization's mission and values, promotes the facility and educates others to volunteer. We congratulate all the 2022 winners.

In October CHANB facilities celebrated the 3rd annual National Catholic Healthcare Week. Several facilities had events where staff were given small gifts in recognition of the week. Staff were also encouraged to look beyond their own facility to the greater community during the week. Several dioceses also participated in the week by sharing information on their websites, in their bulletins and by using the special prayers prepared for use during the week.

In May 2022a virtual CHAC annual conference was held. The theme of the conference was *“Looking within: Creating Culturally ‘Safe Environments of Care for Indigenous Peoples: The conference was very well attended, with excellent speakers and content.*

LEADERSHIP

The Catholic Health Care Leadership Program continues under the Director of Education Services for CHI, Heath Oakley. Enrollment has been excellent and courses are planned through to 2024. The program is generating positive feedback.

CATHOLIC HEALTH ALLIANCE OF CANADA

We continue to be actively involved with the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada (CHAC). The Executive Directors of the provincial Catholic Health Associations are invited to attend the Governor’s Council meetings with one provincial association on the board. Fortunately for CHANB, our Executive Director actually sits on the Board of Governor’s representing CHI while Manitoba continues to hold the appointed seat on the Board. The Governor’s Council has been meeting virtually.

SCHOLARSHIPS

During the past year a large number of applications were received for our Scholarships. Both the Anglophone and Francophone committees met to award scholarships. The awards committee reviewed criteria implemented changes to the number and amount of the scholarships in the past year.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic Planning has been delayed while until Catholic Health International has had a chance to hold their sessions. CHI has set on a firm date in the Fall of 2022 to hold their planning session. As a result, CHANB will set a date for a Strategic Planning session in the winter or spring of 2023. The new plan will be relevant to the new CHI plan and will consider and engaged in assessing the relevance of the present environment and anticipated proposed changes coming to Health care in the province of New Brunswick.

AGREEMENT

During the past year we were successful in renewing the Provincial Agreement for a period of three years. Negotiations will begin on the renewal of the current agreement.

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

