



CHABC Newsletter

CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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CHABC Bursary Awarded to Holy Cross Graduate

Spirituality in Health Care

an essay by Alexandria Palacol

Many people tend to regard spirituality as solely a belief in a higher power. However, although this is a very large part of spirituality, spirituality implies a lot more than religion. It is an awareness of one's own purpose and meaning in life, a realization that what we do here has an ultimate consequence and that our death is not exclusively the definitive end. In times of crisis and suffering, we all find ourselves in a period of hopelessness and despair; a loss of feeling whole and unified with others. Spirituality gives us a sense of hope in this time because it allows us to see beyond ourselves. It gives us a clear vision as to what we are called to be in this world, and gives us hope that there is something greater than the life on Earth. Not only that, it pushes us towards relationships with other like-minded people. Therefore, one can then see the importance of integrating spirituality in health care.

Patients who may be struggling with their own purpose in life and are perhaps at the brink of their death need as much support as they possibly can. When health care workers offer spirituality through a patient's journey, they are bringing hope in a time of suffering, and companionship in a time where one could easily feel secluded in their illness. Spiritual care involves recognizing all the various expressions of spiritual needs that are encountered with patients. People who struggle with a strong fear of death, feelings of isolation and hopelessness are all struggling with spiritual issues. They are searching for a deeper meaning in life and are in need of the compassion and love that spirituality offers.

It is a proven fact that a strong support system aids in the healing process of a patient, or at least decreases levels of depression and anxiety. When one has someone to turn to, they feel loved and cared for. This is so very much needed in times of suffering, and especially in times of sickness. For example, a study was held to determine the effects of religion on the immune system. They found that those attending church were less likely to have high levels of IL-6, which in high amounts can increase chances of diseases. Also, those who prayed regularly or read the Bible were 40 percent less likely to have diastolic hypertension than those who didn't. They discovered this was true because those who went to church had a richer social support system, better coping mechanisms and a stronger sense of personal values. Feeling pain both physically and emotionally is like living in a dark room, but spirituality brings the light of hope to the person who feels trapped by their own suffering. When there is hope, there is always a more likely chance that this person will be able to heal or at least find peace within themselves no matter the end result. Health care workers must give to the patient that sense of hope and belonging, the person with whom they can talk to about their hopes, fears and dreams. Spirituality implies relationship with that person when they struggle to find the core meaning of their lives.

Spirituality can also provide comfort in the last moments of a person's life. When a patient is burdened with guilt or regret about their life, it is very difficult to face their death. When health care workers offer the compassion they need by showing them that they truly can be forgiven in the context of their particular faith, one will more likely be able to face their last moments with a stronger sense of inner peace. Almost everyone wants to die in peace, and spirituality offers this gift to anyone willing to accept it.

All in all, it is clear how large the effect spirituality has on health. Therefore, health care workers must provide to their patients a strong sense of spiritual care. Treating patients with compassion, being there for them in their times of fear and encouraging them to pray or join more social religious groups has a very positive effect on their health. When a doctor or nurse integrates spirituality in their work, they are providing for their patient the feeling of belonging, a sense of purpose, and most of all, the courage to face the future no matter what it holds.



Alexandria Palacol

The CHABC board of directors awarded its first-ever bursary this year to Alexandria Palacol, a graduating student from Holy Cross Secondary School in Surrey. Board chair Catherine Mykyte attended the graduation ceremony at the Chandos Pattison Auditorium on June 10th at which time Alexandria received her award, which included a certificate and a cheque for \$250.

In September, Alexandria will attend the University of British Columbia, where she has been accepted into the science program. Eventually, her plan is to transfer into the nursing program. Alexandria hopes one day to be a paediatric nurse, combining her love of science with her compassion for others. During her

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high school years, she was a volunteer reading buddy at her local library and she offered her services at the Pacific Riding Centre in Langley where she worked with young individuals with developmental disabilities. Every other weekend, she runs the bingo program for seniors who live at the Crescent Gardens retirement home in Surrey.

In addition to the *CHABC* bursary, Alexandria was also given the BC

Science Council Award, academic awards in chemistry, religion and writing and the top academic award for her graduating class.

The criteria for the *CHABC* bursary included the requirement that submissions be sent by students who were enrolled in a Catholic secondary school or who were a member of a BC or Yukon parish and enrolled in a public secondary school. *CHABC* also accepted submissions from those graduating students who were home-schooled. The requirement was that students

submit a 500 word essay that demonstrated an awareness and understanding of the significance of *Spirituality in Health Care*. Of all of the essays received, the board committee that reviewed each one determined that only Alexandria's truly captured the essence of what spirituality means in the health care setting.

CHABC thanks all of this year's bursary applicants. The Association plans to offer this opportunity to graduates next year as well. ■

Catholic Health Association of Canada Moncton Conference Highlights

At the annual convention held in Moncton, New Brunswick on the first weekend in May, *Providence Health Care* President and CEO Dianne Doyle was elected as chairperson of the *Catholic Health Association of Canada*. Dianne is also Vice-President of both the *Catholic Health Association of British Columbia* and of the *Denominational Health Association*. Next year, this event will be held in Quebec City which will also be celebrating its 400th anniversary as a city. In 2009, *CHABC* will host the national association's assembly in Vancouver.

Also at the Moncton convention, Sister Margaret Vickers, SCIC, a Vancouver resident, was one of three recipients of this year's Performance Citation Award, which is Canada's highest distinction in Catholic health care. It is presented each year by the *CHAC* to an individual who exemplifies leadership in an activity, program or project judged worthy of national

recognition for its strengthening of the Catholic health care ministry in an extraordinary way. Sister Margaret has worked in health care in New Brunswick and Saskatchewan. She is currently on Vancouver's *Providence Health Care* board of directors.



Sister Margaret Vickers, SCIC

Co-recipients of this award for 2007 were Sister Charlotte Vickers, SCIC and Sister Sarah Maillet, a member of the Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph, both of whom reside in New Brunswick.

In presenting these awards, *CHAC* Chairperson Charles Gagné stated that these three recipients “*have spent a lifetime seeking ways to make the values of Catholic health care a part of their religious vocations, endeavouring to practice them daily in their ministry and then going the extra step to pass these important values on to others*”.

CHABC works closely throughout the year with *CHAC* and the other provincial Catholic health associations across the country on issues of common concern. Members of *CHABC* currently participate in a working group that is developing principles and guidelines for Catholic health care leadership programs and in another group that is working to refine the existing Values Integration Assessment tool that is used in facilities to measure how we are living the mission of Catholic health care. ■

Access and Advocacy - - Health Care that Works for Everyone

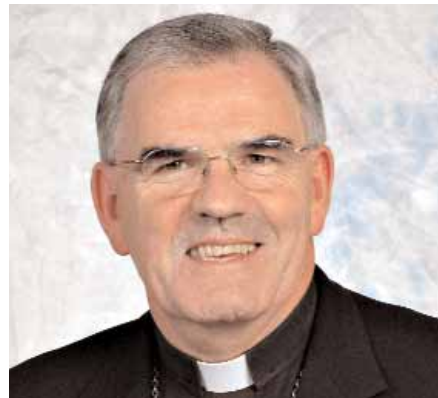


Sister Carol Keehan, President and CEO
Catholic Health Association of the United States

Sister Carol Keehan will be the keynote presenter at CHABC's 2007 conference that will be held this year on September 20th at the Executive Plaza Hotel in Coquitlam. Sister Keehan is the President and CEO of the *Catholic Health Association of the United States* and, in that role, is responsible for all association operations at its national headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri and its office in Washington, DC. She is passionate about social justice and human dignity as they apply to health care and works tirelessly to educate people about the fact that the United States is the only industrialized nation in the world that does not ensure all of its citizens are cared for. Currently, there are more than 46 million Americans who are uninsured and some 18,000 people die each year because they do not have insurance coverage to prevent or treat curable illnesses. Under Sister Keehan's leadership, the CHAUS has made *health care for everyone* a top priority.

What is different and what is the same between Canada and the US? In her presentation, Sister will explore our two systems of

providing care to the sick, the injured, the elderly and the dying and will address the issue of why Catholics are involved in health care and the ministry of Jesus. She will speak about why it is important for the Church to be involved in health care and what challenges exist for Catholic facilities. We may be surprised to learn that, though our two countries have very different ways of providing health care, we are nonetheless the same in many ways. We share a mission to care with compassion for all those in need.



The Most Reverend James Wingle,
Bishop of Saint Catharines, Ontario

The Most Reverend James Wingle will also be one of our conference speakers. He is the Bishop of Saint Catharines, Ontario and is the past representative of the *Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops* to the board of directors of the *Catholic Health Association of Canada*. His talk will encompass the role of the Church in health care and his role as a Bishop in ensuring that, as Catholics, we are "acting, working, praying and thinking as one" as part of the health care ministry. He will speak about how our involvement as Catholics in health care is anchored in the overall message of the Gospels.



Jim Roche, Vice President for
Advocacy, Ethics and Public Policy
Catholic Health Association of Canada

CHABC is also happy to announce that Jim Roche, the Vice President for Advocacy, Ethics and Public Policy with the *Catholic Health Association of Canada*, will participate in our conference to give an update on the work he has been involved in this past year. Some of the issues he will address are quality palliative and end of life care, population health (the impact of multiple factors and conditions that contribute to the health of Canada's population) and his recent work with the public relations directors of Catholic organizations across the country with respect to "branding" Catholic health care. ■

For more information about the conference, you may call the CHABC office or send an email enquiry to smhouse@shawlink.ca. The registration fee will be \$125 for the day. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Adult Guardianship Legislation (Advance Care Directives) Bill 29 (formerly Bill 32)

CHABC has been following the progress of this proposed provincial legislation, part of which is designed to legalize written advance care directives. The Bill went as far as First Reading before the House adjourned for the summer. It will now wait until the House resumes, either in the Fall of this year or Spring of 2008. If the legislation is passed, it will take about a year for regulations and educational material to be developed.

At the May 25th annual general meeting of the *Denominational Health Association*, Health Law Specialist Gerrit Clements gave an informative talk to members about Bill 29, what it is designed to do and the changes that would result for health care providers in our facilities.

CHABC will continue to monitor the progress of the legislation and to work with the Ministries of Health and the Attorney General and the health authorities to ensure that any legislation that is passed will have provisions for people of faith to design an advance care plan that respects the dignity and sanctity of life. It is the Association's plan, once the legislation is in place, to develop a document that can be used for this purpose. ■

Farewell and Thank You to Father Charles Ryan, FSSP

Since 2000, Father Charles Ryan, FSSP, has served *Royal Columbian Hospital* as the Roman Catholic Chaplain. He has recently been reassigned by his congregation and will be assuming his teaching duties at the seminary in Lincoln, Nebraska in August. CHABC thanks Father Ryan for his dedicated commitment to serving the sick, the injured and the dying at *RCH* for the past seven years. He has been a frequent visitor to the CHABC office and we will miss his cheerful good humour. ■



Pastoral Care Visits While in Hospital

We remind the faithful that privacy legislation in BC prevents the free release of information regarding hospital admissions. If you or someone you love are admitted to a hospital or another care facility and if you want a visit from your pastor or a Eucharistic Minister from your parish, you must call your parish office to make this request of your pastor. Pastors may wish to include a note about this in an upcoming Sunday bulletin. ■

CHABC Welcomes New Members

The *Catholic Health Association of BC* is a provincial Association whose membership is comprised of individuals, families, parishes and groups such as CWL and Knights of Columbus councils, as well as hospital and other care facilities in BC. Our operation is dependent upon income from our members. We are also blessed to receive generous financial support from the Vancouver Archdiocese and from some of the other BC and Yukon Bishops.

Membership supports our work to protect and promote Catholic health care in BC and enables CHABC to communicate, share and work with our members and with other health care groups in BC and Canada. We count on personal and professional contributions to enable us to carry out our mission. ■

Annual Membership

Individual membership	\$.45
Family membership	\$.65
Associate membership (for groups and organizations)	\$.160

If you wish to enquire about membership call the CHABC office at 604-524-3427 or send an email to smhouse@shawlink.ca.