

tidings!

April, 2007

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 23-29, 2007

Cover the Uninsured Week

FFI:

www.covertheuninsured.org

June 5, 2007

CHA-MN Board of Directors Meeting

CHI, Minneapolis

FFI: 651/203-2163

June 17-19, 2007

92nd Catholic Health Assembly

Marriott Downtown, Chicago

FFI: www.chausa.org

September 26, 2007

CHA-MN Annual Meeting

Location TBD

FFI: 651/203-2163

The Power of a Thousand Voices: CHA-MN Participates in Day on the Hill

After an early morning strategic discussion at St. Joseph's Hospital in St. Paul, several CHA-MN Board members made their way over to the RiverCentre to participate in Day on the Hill legislative event on Tuesday, March 27th. For several years now, Day on the Hill has brought together about 950 faithful citizens to work for social justice in Minnesota. The event is hosted by the Joint Religious Legislative Conference (JRLC), directed by Brian Rusche, with a wide range of sponsoring and co-sponsoring organizations. This year's theme was "The Power of a Thousand Voices" - early estimates suggest the goal of 1000 participants was achieved.



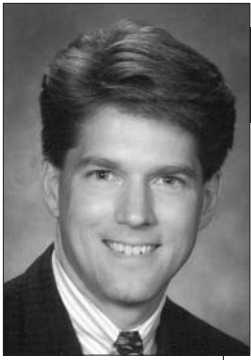
Preliminary meetings at the RiverCentre

The primary purpose of the event was to both educate individuals on the legislative process and the critical issues being addressed at the Capitol - but also to provide an effective means for citizens and organizations to share personal experiences and concerns directly to their legislators. The range of issues covered during the day included: affordable housing, early childhood, poverty, immigration - and healthcare.

After some initial remarks, the floor was given to Fr. Stephen Adrian from St. Matthew's Parish Community of St. Paul, who presented an inspiring keynote address. Though addressing a wide range of issues, much of his content focused on the need for society to speak out on the need for, and right to adequate healthcare (see text excerpt on page 3-4).

Through events like Day on the Hill, the Catholic Health Association of Minnesota continues to be seen and heard at the Capitol.

Day on the Hill *cont. on page 5*



Toby Pearson,
CHA-MN
Executive Director

AS I SEE IT

As we prepare to recognize Cover the Uninsured Week, to be held on April 23-29, 2007, we take note of the current healthcare needs within our state, and the hopeful efforts within our State Legislature.

According to the State of Kids' Coverage campaign, there are more than 80,000 children or about 6.5% of children who are uninsured in Minnesota; the national average is 11.2%. There are

430,000 or about 8.4% of the population that is uninsured; the national average is 15.9%. Though positive in comparison to other

states, and certainly relative to the national average - it is still unacceptable.

As Catholic healthcare providers, we value the dignity of every human being and the sanctity of life from conception to natural death. Healthcare is

more than medicine and doctor visits; it is a fundamental building block for leading healthy,

Promising efforts to reduce the number of uninsured

productive lives. We believe there is a responsibility to ensure the common good and to meet the needs of those who are less fortunate. We believe that healthcare is a basic human right-not a commodity-and we are pledged to creating a healthcare system in the United States that works for everyone.

Informed by the teachings of the Catholic Church on human dignity and social justice, we remain committed to pursuing our guiding principles for a transformed health care system that:

- Makes healthcare available to all, regardless of employment, age, income, or health status;
- Makes a defined set of basic benefits available to all;
- Shares responsibility for health among all-individu-

als, families, healthcare providers, employers, and government;

- Bases healthcare spending on appropriate and efficient use of resources;
- Shares responsibility for financing among government, employers, and individuals;
- Promotes the continuous improvement of healthcare services; and
- Encourages effective participation in decision making by patients and their families

In Minnesota, we have a renewed sense of hope for the possibility of even further reducing the number of uninsured within our state. Within both the Senate and the House there are currently bills that would expand and simplify MNCare coverage. Though, differences within the two versions of the bill still need to be reconciled and merged, and ultimately approval received from the Governor, there is a strong indication that a compromise will be reached - and ultimately, we will potentially see the number of uninsured individuals, both adults and children, reduced even further within our state. For the possibility of this change, we take hope and encouragement - and continue to press forward with the important mission of the Catholic Health Association.

We believe that healthcare is a basic human right - not a commodity - and we are pledged to creating a healthcare system in the United States that works for everyone.

Universal Healthcare, a Corollary to the Inalienable Right to Life

Fr. Stephen Adrian,
St. Matthew's Parish Community, St. Paul

(The following is an excerpt from Fr. Adrian's keynote address from the JRLC's Day on the Hill, March 27, 2007.)

What has happened to the common good?

Sometimes I sleep restlessly. Some time ago I found myself pacing the floor at 2 am unable to get back to sleep. I turned on the TV and surfed the channels. I hit CSPAN. On that morning, at 2 am CSPAN was replaying the 1973 State of the Union Message of Richard Nixon.

Now, I am a product of the 60's. I marched with Cesar Chavez. I stood in Soldiers Field, arms licked with tens of thousands of sisters and brothers, ready to march with Dr King. So, I couldn't help myself - I nursed a deep dislike and distrust for Mr. Nixon.

Also, that night I was enough of an insomniac to sit and listen to his agenda for 1973.

I could not believe what I was hearing. He urged congress to raise the minimum wage, to fully fund federal educational mandates and to establish universal health care for



Rev. Stephen Adrian at the Day on the Hill

all citizens. Beyond that, he asked congress to raise the revenue necessary to ensure this quality of life for all Americans - especially those most vulnerable.

What I began to understand was this. In 1973 there was still a sense of the common good; a sense shared by liberals and conservatives alike. Democrats and

Republicans had different approaches to accomplish the task - but by and large there was no doubt about the task.

What happened to us? When and where did this sense of the common good evaporate? I must have been snoozing, I missed it. Can we hold today that we are endowed with certain inalienable rights? Can our society once again enter that difficult and intense conversation that allows us to rediscover our roots and our values? Can houses of worship once more become the locale of this discussion - in cities and farms? Can trades people and health care workers, can entrepreneurs and bureaucrats, can merchants and teachers, can Muslims and Jews and Christians, can Republicans and Democrats, can we agree to respect each other and go deep within our collective soul to rediscover the truths which alone can animate a rebirth of a sense of the common good?

Can we agree that universal health care is a corollary to the inalienable right to life? Can we agree that the universal health care of children and youth is a good and necessary first step?

For one hundred years our nation has unsuccessfully wrestled

Adrian *cont. on page 4*

Adrian *cont. from page 3*

to achieve the goal of full health care for all its people. In the past century the clarion call was first issued by Theodore Roosevelt, and later by Harry Truman. In November 1945 President Truman declared:

“We must resolve now that the health of this nation is a national concern; that financial barriers in the way of attaining health shall be removed; that the health of all its citizens deserves the help of all the nation.”

"The health of American children, like their education, must be recognized as a definite public responsibility."

Then we joined the nations of the world almost fifty years ago in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Children:

“The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.”

“The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end, special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.”

A year ago Senator Durenberger reminded us:

“Minnesotans are ready for changes. In many ways, the people of Minnesota are ahead of the policy makers...They know change will be difficult and will

require contributions from everyone, but they also know that we no longer can just tinker around the edges.”

So, can we agree that a corollary of the inalienable right to life is the available, accessible appropriate and adequate health care for all?

Can we agree that a strong, vibrant, high quality educational opportunity for all, from early childhood through post secondary education is vital and necessary if we are to be a strong citizenry capable of self-government and the ability to debate and decide the future of our society? Can we agree that a free society cannot long endure without a fully educated citizenry?

Can we agree that the pursuit of happiness demands that a people be well housed, well fed and honestly and justly compensated for their labors? Can we agree?

And, can we agree that the blight of poverty cannot co-exist with a good society and that we have the capacity and the will to end poverty in Minnesota by 2020? Can we agree?

And Oh, can we agree that all of this costs money, and taxes is not an obscene word? Can we agree that we have the resource to support and maintain a good society, and that we are willing to pay the price to make this state once again good and once again strong? Can we agree?

If we can agree - we can establish a good society - God willing.

Thank you.

The health of American children, like their education, must be recognized as a definite public responsibility.

CHA-MN Strategic Plan Taking Shape

The CHA-MN Board of Directors has been actively working toward articulating a clearer mission / vision statement and strategic plan. It is the intention to have these documents formally reviewed and adopted by the members at the Annual Meeting on September 26, 2007.

The following is the proposed Mission and Vision Statement:

Catholic Health Association of Minnesota (CHA-MN) is a state association of Catholic health providers joined together to support access to health care and to promote, strengthen and fulfill the healing mission of the Church.

CHA-MN, in concert with the vision enunciated by Catholic Health Association of the United States strives to be a "vibrant presence in enhancing the health of communities and access to quality care for everyone, with special attention to those who are underserved and most vulnerable."

CHA-MN seeks to achieve this vision through strategies that are patterned on Catholic Social Teaching inspired by Biblical justice and the healing ministry of Christ: promote and defend human dignity, care for poor and vulnerable persons, act on behalf of justice, attend to the whole person, promote the common good, steward resources, and act in communion with the church.

The following goals provide the framework for the current strategic planning model for the Catholic Health Association of Minnesota:

Advocate for specific issues in the Minnesota legislature.

- Develop proactive legislative positions consistent with CHA national initiatives
- Support those positions through member dialogue, communication with legislators and legislative lobbying.
- Serve as a catalyst to facilitate, educate and collaborate / partner with members, other Catholic / Christian and professional / civic organizations on specific issues which advance Catholic social teaching.

Enhance relationships with bishops, sponsors, and other leaders within the Church.

- Increase communications and promote dialogue among CHA-MN members and the respective Minnesota bishops, health systems, sponsor(s) and leaders of other Church-related organizations.
- Coordinate, as appropriate, legislative strategies, CHA-MN activities and communications with the Minnesota Catholic Conference (MCC).

Support a sense of community among CHA-MN members.

- Encourage regional structures to improve dialogue and communication on issues of concern to members including health systems.
- Encourage sharing of information and expertise among members / health systems on integrating Catholic mission and values into local best practices.
- Provide regular communication through newsletters, legislative alerts, news releases, web site on topics of current interest.

We look forward to an engaging Annual Meeting in September to further refine and adopt our plan. Registration and details will be forwarded to members during the summer months.

Day on the Hill *cont. from page 1*



Bishop Richard Pates and Bishop Victor Balke visit with Day on the Hill participant Bernadette Dunn.

With some issue briefings presented by a range of speakers, the "Thousand Voices" began their journey from the RiverCentre over to the State Capitol. The CHA-MN Board Members were included in this bus procession with a list of strategic issues to

discuss with legislators. The four primary issues to present included: 1) expansion and increased reimbursements for MNCare; 2) the Children's Health Security Act; 3) longterm care facility rate adjustments; and 4) emergency contraception in the emergency room.

After a prayer led by Bishop Victor Balke, Diocese of Crookston, the large contingency had box lunches throughout the Capitol, followed by an afternoon of appointments and meeting with individual legislators. The JRLC reported that a new record for conducting visits with legislators was set this year and they heard many good things about the relationships built within legislative districts.

CHA-MN Executive Director commenting on the event saw great value in having board members see the legislative process firsthand. "Through events like Day on the Hill, the Catholic Health Association of Minnesota continues to be seen and heard at the Capitol."

MISSION:

BELIEVING IN THE WORTH AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON MADE IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD, THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION-MINNESOTA ASSISTS ITS MEMBERS TO FULFILL THE HEALING MISSION OF THE CHURCH.



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News & Notes

- **Saint Marys Hospital, Rochester**, has been named one of the top 50 hospitals in the nation. This ranking of U.S. hospitals was based on results from the first Leapfrog Top Hospital Quality and Safety Survey, which is a national rating system that offers a broad assessment of a hospital's quality and safety.
- **St. Cloud Hospital** recently was named one of the nation's 100 Top Hospitals by Solucient, part of Thomson Healthcare, a leading provider of information and solutions to improve the cost and quality of health care. The award recognizes hospitals that have achieved excellence in clinical outcomes, patient safety, financial performance, efficiency, and growth in patient volume.
- **Sr. Margaret Smith** was honored recently for 60 years of dedication to the healing mission of **St. Joseph's Area Health Services, Park Rapids**, since it opened its doors back in 1946. St. Margaret's lifetime of devotion to her mission serves as an inspiration to staff as well as the patients and families she has touched.
- **St. Joseph's Hospital**, St. Paul, has named **Sara Criger** as their new CEO effective March 12, 2007. Criger, who is resigning her position as president of Fairview Ridges Hospitals and Clinics, served in a variety of leadership positions at Fairview for 16 years. "We will work diligently and purposefully to fulfill our ongoing mission of delivering the level of compassionate care this hospital is known for and to create a benchmark-for-quality organization by 2010."
- The hospital at **Divine Providence Health Center, Ivanhoe**, has been closed as of March 1, 2007.

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