

Pausing to Reflect



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The theme of this year's Catholic Health Assembly invokes two equally important responses: We celebrate all that is good in the Catholic health ministry, and we seek out wisdom that will allow us to do even more for the persons and communities served by our organizations. For three days in Chicago, we pause to reflect—*Touching Lives, Healing Communities*—we rejoice in our successes, and we pursue the inspiration to continue Jesus' healing mission.

Every column, feature, and department in this special issue of *Health Progress* demonstrates, in one way or another, how the Catholic health ministry is concerned with touching lives and healing communities. Some articles hold up the laudable achievements realized by our ministry colleagues. Some point out areas where further improvements are needed and offer constructive ideas for such efforts. And some simply remind us why we committed ourselves to this ministry in the first place.

For many attendees, myself included, the highlight of every Catholic Health Assembly is the conferral of CHA's Achievement Citation. Most of us in the banquet room will not have heard of the awardee, but by the end of the tribute video and acceptance speech, we will enthusiastically cheer for them as if we've been friends for years. We have found a connection that goes beyond mere admiration for the good work of another. In them, through their honor on this special night, the rest of us are affirmed. We see positive, transformative results coming out of an authentic embrace of their mission, *our* mission. One of ours did good, and we are proud.

For a few days each June, we gather to share our ideas, concerns, triumphs, and dreams; to reflect on what we've done and on where we are being called. We represent different organizations and an assortment of professional disciplines. We've experienced a variety of challenges and different levels of success. But the one thing we all share, the reason we stand and applaud our colleagues' accomplishments, is the unity we feel in our ever-present commitment to touch lives and heal communities.

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