



CHAC advocacy



Advocacy Update: Nov. 18, 2006



St. Elizabeth's Hospital
Humboldt, SK

Tubal ligations – St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Humboldt, SK

(mid-September, 2006)

In September the board of St. Elizabeth's Hospital announced that tubal ligations would not be performed at the hospital, and that such services would be transferred to Saskatoon. The issue received broad provincial – and some national – media coverage with editorials calling for a review of the provincial agreements that allow for affiliate hospitals, and to convert all of Saskatchewan's facilities to be publicly owned and universally accessible for all services, regardless of religious beliefs. Throughout this period the CHAC staff maintained close contact with the Sponsor organization (the Saskatchewan Catholic Health Corporation) and the provincial association, and responded to a number of media requests for interviews.



Ecumenical Health Care Network (EHCN): Annual Planning Meeting

(Sept. 18, 2006)

The day-long annual planning meeting of the EHCN, of which CHAC is a member, took place in Kingston. Representatives from 7 Christian churches and the Canadian Council of Churches met to discuss the following agenda: a discussion about what are likely to be the key health care issues over the coming year; a review of a draft paper commissioned by the Network describing the involvement of the Christian churches in Canada in relation to the struggle for public health care; and to plan for a meeting with the federal Minister of Health scheduled for October 26.



International Congress on Care for the Terminally Ill, Montreal (Sept. 27, 2006)

On September 27 Jim Roche attended several sessions offered during the International Congress on Care for the Terminally Ill. The event also provided an opportunity to meet with Sr. Karin Dufault, SP, Executive Director of the Supportive Care Coalition in the United States. The Supportive Care Coalition is committed to pursuing excellence in palliative care and is currently engaged in the *CALL Care* project, a demonstration program aimed at integrating the services and support that health care facilities offer patients and families at the end of life. Improving access to quality end-of-life care for all Canadians is one of the goals of CHAC's three-year advocacy agenda.



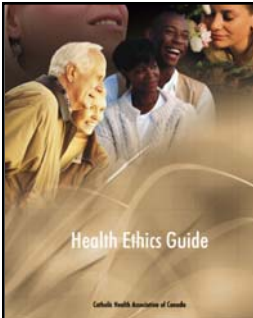
Quality End-of-Life Care Coalition of Canada (QELCCC) (Oct. 12, 2006)

The Advocacy Committee of the QELCCC (of which Jim Roche is a member) met to discuss the federal government's decision to cut the budget of the Secretariat on Palliative and End-of-Life Care by 50%. The Secretariat is a division within Health Canada that was established several years ago to develop a sustainable strategy for improved end-of-life care in Canada. On November 7 the Coalition wrote to the Minister of Health protesting the funding cut.



Launch of CHAC's new website (Oct. 16, 2006)

CHAC's new website provides a variety of new resources designed to inform and update members on the advocacy activities of the Association. The site: describes the Association's advocacy goals and outcomes; provides information and resources on current health care issues; presents new and archived press releases; provides member-only access to advocacy reports; and updates members on the activities of the various coalitions of which CHAC is a member.



Canadian Christian Bioethicists Network (CCBN) newsletter (October 18, 2006)

The advocacy office of the CHAC provides secretariat services to the CCBN – a network of Christian ethicists in Canada who have a particular interest and expertise in health care ethics. Each year on the occasion of the Canadian Bioethics Society annual meeting, in a separate meeting coordinated by the CHAC, network members gather to discuss ethical issues pertinent to health care in faith-based health care organizations. Throughout the year the CHAC fosters ongoing dialogue among network members and produces a periodic newsletter.



Meeting with the Minister of Health (October 26, 2006)

On October 26 representatives of the Ecumenical Health Care Network (EHCN), including Jim Roche from the CHAC, met with the Federal Minister of Health, Tony Clement. The agenda for the meeting covered the following points:

- support for the Minister’s recent comments in defense of Canada’s publicly-funded health care system and encouragement to maintain that stance;
- the need for accountability in how the \$41.3 billion dollar federal contribution outlined in the 2004 Health Accord with the provinces is being spent and whether benchmarks are being met;
- the importance of showcasing innovation in health care delivery in Canada. (On this note the Minister informed those at the meeting that he has proposed to the provinces that a “Success Conference” be held early in 2007.



Meeting with PMO Social Policy Advisor (Nov. 2, 2006)

On November 2 Jim Roche met with Ms. Danielle Shaw, Social Policy Advisor in the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO). The meeting provided an opportunity to outline CHAC’s advocacy goals, particularly in relation to safeguarding justice and equity in the delivery of health care in Canada, and the promotion of the dignity of the person in public policy. The decision of the Conservative government to cut funding to the Secretariat on Palliative Care (see item dated Oct. 12) was also raised. Emphasis was placed on Statistics Canada estimates that by 2020 there will be a 33% increase in the number of annual deaths in Canada – a situation that will result in an even greater demand for quality end-of-life care in the future. Ms. Shaw agreed to meet to discuss the issue of palliative care care in greater detail on December 6.



Catholic Health Care Forum (Nov. 15-16, 2006)

One of the three goals of CHAC’s advocacy efforts involves the positioning of Catholic health care in the health care system – advocating the values, organizational culture, qualities and achievements of members. In one expression of this mandate, the CHAC acted as convener for the November 15-16 Catholic Health Care Forum that brought together 45 representatives from Catholic health care organizations to reflect on the state of Catholic health care in terms of its preparedness to respond to and excel in a changing health and social environment over the next 15 years. (More information on the Forum will be distributed to members in a special issue of *Board Highlights* that will be distributed during the week of Nov. 27.)



National Medicare Week (Nov. 13-18, 2006)

On November 13 the CHAC issued a news release to mark the beginning of National Medicare Week. Key health associations, including the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), have marked this as a week to showcase the strengths of Canada’s health care system. During National Medicare Week the CHAC co-sponsored a public lecture by Sr. Carol Keehan, DC (see following item) that highlighted the fact that more than 46 million Americans have no medical coverage. This reality highlights the achievement that Medicare represents in Canada, ensuring all citizens have access to health services regardless of ability to pay.



Public Lecture - Sr. Carol Keehan, DC (Nov. 16, 2006)

On the evening of November 16 the CHAC co-sponsored with Saint Paul University a public lecture by Sr. Carol Keehan, DC, President and CEO of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA). Sr. Carol spoke about the state of health care in the U.S. with emphasis on the fact that more than 46 million Americans currently are without health insurance coverage. Addressing this as an issue of justice and human dignity, she also described the efforts of CHA to make health care for all American citizens a top priority.



On-going Faith-Based and Ethical Issues

One of CHAC's advocacy roles is to keep abreast of, and keep members informed on, ethical reflection on issues of concern to Catholic health care. In addition to the research activity involved to fulfill this function, contact with the members of the CCBN (see item dated Oct. 18) helps to keep the national office informed about ethical issues as they arise, and to be a conduit for information sharing among members. The CHAC website provides a mechanism for providing Catholic analysis of such ethical issues. Many of the briefs and submissions submitted to government by the CHAC in recent years have addressed such ethical issues as: stem cell research, genetic technologies, euthanasia, and organ donation. In the period from September to November 2006 members requested assistance in relation to two ethical issues: the Catholic position in regard to tubal ligations, and donation after cardiac death (DCD).



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