

Changes underscore Baylor's commitment to ministry of healing

May 3, 2010

DALLAS—Commitment to Christian healing ministry has guided [Baylor Health Care System](#) since its founding, but creation of an office of mission and ministry has given renewed emphasis to that defining sense of purpose, hospital officials said.

Chaplain Mark Grace, longtime director of pastoral care at Baylor, was named vice president of the new office of mission and ministry. The office brings together three ministry components—spiritual care to patients, their families and hospital staff; pastoral education programs for ministers, seminary students and laity; and faith in action initiatives.

“It pulls together all facets of the health care system that relate to faith,” Grace said. “It’s more than token banner-waving. It’s identifying at the corporate level in an explicit way that this is how we’re going to do business.”

Baylor President and CEO Joel Allison described the organizational change as “the beginning of a new era in Baylor Health Care System’s commitment to its Christian ministry of healing.”

Allison pointed to a four-fold purpose in creating the office:

- *Re-envision ways to strengthen and streamline Baylor’s historical Christian ministry of healing.*
- *Explore new ways to engage and support Baylor employees as they live*

out their faith and values in service to others.

- *Embed mission and ministry programs across the expanding health care system.*
- *Partner with other Christian mission and ministry agencies to help meet medical missions needs locally and around the world.*

“I think we’re seeing a resurgence of enthusiasm among our trustees, executive officers, medical staff and employees toward our mission as a Christian ministry of healing,” said John McWhorter, president of Baylor University Medical Center.

Grace sees the office of mission and ministry as a place where Baylor can help employees and staff explore “the interchange between practice and faith and to see their work as sacred vocation.”

While individuals on the Baylor Health Care System staff long have been involved in volunteer service and mission trips, the new faith in action initiatives program provides a coordinated approach to offering employees a way to “put feet to faith,” Grace said.

“It’s taking it to another level by embedding this in the daily life of the organization,” he explained.

Don Sewell, who served 12 years with the Baptist General Convention of Texas in the areas of Partnership Missions and as liaison to worldwide agencies and who has worked most recently with the Baptist World Alliance, directs the faith in action initiatives.

Baylor works closely with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Buckner International and other ministry partners, both globally and locally, and the health care system expects to see that emphasis grow, McWhorter noted.

For example, Baylor employees volunteer to serve meals to the homeless at Cornerstone Baptist Church in inner-city Dallas once a month. Baylor also provides staffing for Cornerstone's medical and dental clinic.

"We have a waiting list of departments wanting to serve," McWhorter said.