



## Catholic Healthcare Collaboration Aims for Comprehensive Solutions to Advance Response to the Poor

Archdiocese of Seattle, Catholic Community Services/Catholic Housing Services of Western Washington, PeaceHealth, Providence Health Services and Virginia Mason Franciscan Health form new partnership

**SEATTLE, May 11, 2022** – The Catholic Healthcare Collaboration, an innovative partnership to transform the way Catholic organizations respond to the cry of the poor and those on the margins, was announced today by the Archdiocese of Seattle.

Joining the partnership are the Archdiocese, Catholic Community Services/Catholic Housing Services of Western Washington and regional Catholic healthcare organizations including PeaceHealth, Providence and Virginia Mason Franciscan Health. Each has signed a five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU), which starts with a \$5 million total commitment for the collaboration.

“We are the living Body of Christ, and together we will go out to live the Gospel by serving as Christ to those most in need,” said Archbishop Paul D. Etienne. “I am extremely grateful to each partner and to the founding religious communities of the Sisters of Providence, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace and the Sisters of St. Francis, who have been lovingly providing healthcare to everyone in our communities since the 1800s. Today, the urgent need for outreach and care in our communities is so clear. It’s an all-hands-on-deck moment for the common good of society, and this is just the beginning.”

The Catholic Healthcare Collaboration aims to provide more comprehensive solutions for members of the community with the greatest needs by combining expertise and efforts across different Catholic entities. The first planned projects will assist homeless people discharged from hospitals, asylum seekers, and community members who have difficulty accessing health care.

“We’re eager to work with the Archdiocese and our Catholic healthcare organizations on this vision because it greatly benefits the communities we serve and demonstrates how the Catholic Church is taking action to reach out to those on the margins,” said Michael Reichert, president of CCS/CHS. “We are grateful to Archbishop Etienne for gathering these partners together and we’re grateful to everyone who is diligently working to elevate the dignity of all people regardless of who they are or where they came from.”

### Developing the Catholic Healthcare Collaboration

As the first collaboration of its kind in Western Washington, the Catholic Healthcare Collaboration is a true blending of expertise across the healthcare and social services spectrum. Each partner has senior leadership representation in the Executive Sponsorship Group, which is developing the collaboration’s

five-year strategy. The Executive Sponsorship Group formed a Leadership Council, which will oversee and execute the specific collaborative projects across the archdiocese, which encompasses all of Western Washington.

### **First Projects**

The Executive Sponsorship Group has approved the first three projects developed by the Leadership Council. These projects are in their early planning phases and are expected to roll out over the next year:

#### ***Expanding Community Health Workers***

This project seeks to expand the community health worker model, a proven and effective way to help marginalized people access healthcare, by increasing the number of community health workers in local communities. Potential sites for these workers will be chosen based on input from communities, combined with advanced data mapping to determine the areas of greatest need based on a unique social vulnerability index score.

“This is a proven model that we hope to expand across underserved communities in Washington state,” said Rose Shandrow, senior vice president and chief mission officer at Virginia Mason Franciscan Health. “We are thrilled to be part of this initiative to help increase the number of community health workers in our region and improve access to physical and behavioral health care for those in need.”

#### ***Medical Respite and Recuperative Care***

Following Gospel values, many Catholic hospitals face challenges when discharging homeless individuals who do not have a safe environment to call home. Hospitals often keep homeless patients much longer than necessary because there is no other place for them to recover. This Catholic Healthcare Collaboration project aims to develop a place-based medical respite and recuperative care strategy to assist homeless patients who need to recover outside a hospital setting.

“This work centers on patients who are experiencing homelessness and provides them with an off ramp from the cycle of street – emergency department – acute care bed – street that we see all too often,” said Timothy A. Zaricznyj, Ed.D., executive director of Providence Supportive Housing. “We believe we will achieve a model of housing and healthcare that is adaptable and scalable beyond Western Washington. While this work will not fix homelessness, nor will it solve all of the long length-of-stay challenges in healthcare, it will serve to address the housing and healthcare needs of a subset of people who have languished without appropriate housing and healthcare resources for too long.”

#### ***Asylum Seeker Assistance***

Asylum seekers are people who have left their countries and are seeking international protection in another country from persecution and serious human rights violations. The U.S. government welcomes asylum seekers and has a specific legal process for them to obtain asylum. This project aims to connect the most vulnerable asylum seekers currently in the legal process with trained healthcare professionals who can complete their recommended psychosocial evaluations and find appropriate support for asylum seekers affected by trauma.

## **Ongoing Work**

The Leadership Council will continue to meet regularly to ensure progress across the three inaugural projects. While the team will be focused on these first projects, other projects will be developed over the next five years.

“My greatest hope is that those we serve experience the presence of Christ through our concrete actions,” Archbishop Etienne said.

For more information, please visit [archseattle.org/CatholicHealth](http://archseattle.org/CatholicHealth).

## **About the Archdiocese of Seattle**

The Archdiocese of Seattle encompasses all of Western Washington, stretching from Canada to Oregon and from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. There are 72 Catholic Schools, 174 parishes, missions and pastoral centers in the archdiocese, with more than 500 weekly Masses celebrated in eight languages. Archbishop Paul D. Etienne leads the archdiocese with his auxiliary bishops, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo and Bishop Frank Schuster. For more information about the Archdiocese of Seattle, visit [www.archseattle.org](http://www.archseattle.org).

## **About Catholic Community Services/Catholic Housing Services of Western Washington**

Catholic Community Services/Catholic Housing Services (CCS/CHS) is the largest private non-profit social service organization serving Western Washington. For over 100 years, the agency has compassionately provided quality, integrated social services and housing to poor and vulnerable children, women and men of all beliefs. Through over 180 programs, CCS/CHS offers an array of services that address nearly every human need, including pregnancy support, children’s mental health, case management, emergency food and shelter, youth tutoring, in-home care and mental health and addiction recovery. CHS develops, owns or manages more than 2,500 affordable housing units at 62 properties throughout Western Washington. Housing and supportive services are provided to homeless and special needs individuals and families, low-income seniors, farmworkers and veterans. CCS/CHS employees and volunteers come from many faith traditions to serve and support nearly 100,000 children, women and men annually. For more information, visit [ccsww.org](http://ccsww.org).

## **About Providence**

Providence is a national, not-for-profit Catholic health system comprising a diverse family of organizations and driven by a belief that health is a human right. With 52 hospitals, over 900 physician clinics, senior services, supportive housing and many other health and educational services, the health system and its partners employ nearly 120,000 caregivers serving communities across seven states — Alaska, California, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Washington, with system offices in Renton, Washington, and Irvine, California. Learn about our vision of health for a better world at [Providence.org](http://Providence.org).

## **About PeaceHealth**

PeaceHealth, based in Vancouver, Washington, is a not-for-profit Catholic health system offering care to communities in Washington, Oregon and Alaska. PeaceHealth has more than 15,000 caregivers, a group practice with more than 1,200 providers and 10 medical centers serving both urban and rural communities throughout the Northwest. In 1890, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace founded what has become PeaceHealth. The Sisters shared expertise and transferred wisdom from one medical center to another, always finding the best way to serve the unmet need for healthcare in their communities. Today, PeaceHealth is the legacy of the founding Sisters and continues with a spirit of respect, stewardship, collaboration and social justice in fulfilling its mission. Visit us online at [peacehealth.org](http://peacehealth.org).

## **About Virginia Mason Franciscan Health**

Virginia Mason Franciscan Health is a world-class health system serving the Puget Sound region of Washington state, offering access to some of the country’s most prestigious experts and hospitals that are internationally

recognized for superior quality. Our expansive system builds upon the strength of our more than 300 sites of care, including 11 top-tier hospitals, 18,000 team members and 5,400 employed physicians, advance practice providers (APPs) and community providers to improve the health of our communities. Together, we deliver easily accessible, instantly responsive and digitally connected patient-centric care. Learn more at [vmfh.org](http://vmfh.org).