

# **“A Theological Statement of the Mutual Relationship Between BroMenn Healthcare System and the Ministry of the Brokaw-Mennonite Association Delegate Churches”**

Adopted by the Delegate Executive Committee of the Brokaw-Mennonite Association  
June 28, 2004

## **Parts I-III**

### **Part I: A brief history of the church relationship of BroMenn Healthcare, and a rationale/explanation for this document.**

BroMenn Healthcare came to be in 1984. Since 1984 there have been many extensions of our mission.

Our original founders were farmers, shop owners, ministers, church leaders, teachers, homemakers, lawyers, judges, nurses, and doctors.

- They shared a common Christian faith.
- They shared a strong sense of community and public service.
- They felt a responsibility and calling to express Christian compassion for those who suffer and to facilitate the health and healing of the people in our communities.

The foresight and compassion of these founders have been continued through the succeeding leadership in our delegate churches and medical center to the present time. Seventy percent of the Board of Directors are members of the delegate churches.

Originally, our delegate churches played a major role in the day-by-day operations of the hospitals, including significant funding, volunteer staffing, and even providing home-grown food for the patients.

Healthcare, in the intervening years, has undergone accelerated changes. There have been more changes in the practice of healthcare in the last half-century than in all of recorded history. Along with these changes the expectations people have of healthcare providers have soared. Hospitals as our founders knew and led them cannot remain viable in today's world.

In the light of these changes the leaders of BroMenn have initiated a conversation about what it means to be a church related healthcare center in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the spring of 2003 Roger Hunt (President and CEO of BroMenn) convened a committee of ministers from delegate churches to explore these matters. At the end of its deliberations, the committee members recommended bylaw changes which would lead to the establishment of a more activist delegate church body led by an executive committee. The newly constituted Association will engage in Shared Ministry Projects and advise the Board of Directors in its spiritual stewardship of BroMenn Healthcare (this document is a step in that direction).

The Board of Directors received and gave a positive affirmation of the study

committee's report. The committee's recommendations will be part of a larger document of bylaw changes presented for vote at the May 2004 Annual Meeting.

Readers will find in the following pages:

- some formal statements of what church relatedness can/should mean in this new situation
- some initiatives of our church relationships to celebrate
- some leading questions for discussion by BroMenn leaders

## **Part II: The Mission Statement of BroMenn Healthcare**

To improve the health and well being of our community by educating, healing, and serving in a manner consistent with our Judeo-Christian heritage.

## **Part III: A theological statement of a faith based medical center of the Delegate churches**

Five unique features of a faith based medical center of the Delegate churches

### **1. A faith based medical center of the Delegate churches lives with a sense of calling from God.**

A church medical center has a holy calling to perform healing ministries. Through this sense of call, God summons the church medical ministries to remain honest to God, fighting off the temptations to become exclusively body shops or profit centers.

A medical center living with a sense of calling from God will be looking for the ways to help all of its people, health care professionals, support staff and administration, to share in this sense of calling from God. The Biblical call to find oneself by losing oneself in Christ's service needs continual emphasis. There is no substitute for the conviction that one is called by God to a servant ministry in a servant facility for medical care. This sense of calling from God shows up in many ways: the constant effort to improve healing skills, a positive demeanor, a cooperative spirit, acts of kindness, gentleness, patience, the attention to detail; all are the little and big ways by which a person shows genuine concern for people who need health care.

### **2. A faith based medical center of the Delegate churches is identified with its theological roots.**

Health care in theological terms becomes much more than a temporary restoration of bodily functions. Health care, healing, restoration of human body, mind and spirit, are signs of the kingdom of God. Each healing event becomes an occasion for joy. In a similar fashion, occasions of loss and deep pain experienced in the medical center are held within the context of a larger claim on our lives.

Judeo-Christian theological foundations will insist that people in healing ministries understand that health is a whole person phenomenon. There are no simple formulas for diagnosing human ailments, though there are always attempts to make it simple. A church medical center must live with the knowledge that everything in a person's being has to do with everything else in the person.

### **3. A faith based medical center of the Delegate churches lives with a lively sense of its**

## **history.**

The medical center's responsible people see themselves as heirs of those who have traversed the globe establishing congregations of believers, starting schools, and beginning medical ministries. The church, the school, and the medical center are symbols of the Christian concern for the spirit, the mind, and the body of every human being. A church medical center sees its mission in broader terms than "body repair." It has a concern for the whole person.

### **4. A faith based medical center of the Delegate churches understands itself to be a partner in a total health care ministry.**

Medical centers are partners with a whole host of public and private ministries that help make possible a healthy existence for individual and corporate humanity. Social service agencies, educational institutions, businesses, and social groups all have their role to play in sustaining a healthy social body.

High drama occurs within a hospital at the beginning of life, at the end of life, and many stops in between. Medical centers are an important part of a multi-faceted society that is trying to attain and maintain a healthy humanity.

It is necessary that church medical centers see themselves as partners in a vast array of agencies and institutions sharing a total health care ministry.

### **5. A faith based medical center of the Delegate churches needs to be at the forefront of community health care involvement.**

A faith based church medical center is the church pioneering in areas of need that impact society. Access, cost, justice, and ethics are but samples of the ever-broadening range of issues begging for answers. Church medical ministries have a primary responsibility in placing the critical questions before both church and society.

Healing, health care, and concern for the whole person are the determiners of success in a church medical center. All the items mentioned above, the history, the sense of calling, the theological foundation, the partnerships, the pioneering character of church health care institutions, ought to give Christian centers for healing something very special to offer as health care institutions.