

**The Vision for
Adventist Healthcare Ministry in North America***

...seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." Jer 29:7NIV

I will bring health and healing to the city; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. Jer 33:6 NIV

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. John 10:10 KJV

...the angel showed me the river of the water of life...flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb...on each side...stood the tree of life...And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Rev 22:1-3 NIV

...I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live ²⁰ and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land...Deut 30:19-20 NIV

"He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" Luke 9:2

During His ministry, Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. His miracles testified to the truth of His words, that He came not to destroy, but to save. EGW, MOH

Introduction.

Since the 19th Century, Seventh-day Adventists have been developing faithful, innovative approaches to health for the whole person. The successes of the past have laid the foundation for renewing a vision of faith-inspired healthcare in which patients experience seamless excellence, integrating the best of spiritually nurturing care. The challenges of providing health care in the 21st Century make the renewal of this vision imperative. The opportunities for leading our society, as it seeks to reform its health system, are unprecedented.

Developing new forms of collaboration between our Church and its health systems will open new channels for service throughout North America. By embracing the mission and core values we share, we will find new ways to bear witness to our Creator's love, and new avenues for vivifying the prophetic message of the Advent movement. The central convictions of this movement have caused us to plant healthcare institutions in the "furrow of the world's needs." Today, more people come into personal contact with

Adventist ministry through our healthcare institutions than in any other way. These institutions, in cooperation with faith communities within their regions, can elevate the health outcomes for countless people with complex needs.

In this brief statement of vision, we express some of the theological and ethical convictions we believe are most essential for faithfulness in our Adventist health ministry. We know that clarity regarding these beliefs is necessary if we are to sustain genuinely faithful Adventist healthcare institutions that are strategically aligned with the mission of our Church.

Convictions.

At its best, health care is mission-focused love in action. We believe that we have been created by our loving God as whole persons – each one a unity of body, mind, and spirit, capable of experiencing the joy of wholeness within relationships of trust. Healing ministry, as given to us by Jesus Christ, is the work of helping persons to regain their wholeness. This ministry includes careful attention to the physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational dimensions of a person's life. Such work is always more than business exchanges. Many of the persons who most need care are in socially complex circumstances and have little to offer in the exchange of commodities. We believe that all persons in need of healthcare, regardless of their social or economic status, are beloved of God. Each one presents us with a unique opportunity to serve our Lord Jesus personally.

We are committed to providing the highest quality of evidence-based health care in ways that nurture the human spirit and offer transcendent hope. Because of the vastness of medical needs in today's society, we are also committed to offering care that is efficient and cost-worthy. We are eager to advance effective, new approaches to disease prevention and health promotion. We are convinced that the establishment of trust is crucial to our work, so we are dedicated to principles of transparency and integrity in the communities we serve.

As we live by these convictions, we aspire to serve our Lord and our Church by finding creative approaches to healthcare ministry. Such approaches include developing partnerships between healthcare institutions and communities of faith enabling every congregation to be a center for health, healing and wholeness in the community. We can express this vision with a concluding invitation to *imagine* a world in which the communities we serve are blessed by the healthcare ministry to which our Creator has called us:

Imagine.

I – Incarnational ministry...becoming one with our community, knowing and understanding their needs and together striving to elevate their wellbeing.

M – Making a tangible, measurable and meaningful difference in people's lives.

A - Actions that are culturally competent, data driven, professionally developed and personally delivered.

G- Geographically touching every community on this continent with the needed and helpful ministry of Healing.

I – Inculcating integrative, grace-filled partnerships with community resources, thereby re-envisioning, re-energizing, and leveraging resources to meet the community's need.

N – Network of congregations and healthcare institutions, partnering as the Church to educate, nurture and inspire a culture of wholeness.

E – Evangelizing as Jesus did: Seeking first to fill the people's needs, He then invited them to follow Him.

**An initial draft of this document was discussed at a meeting of executive leaders from the North American Division and General Conference with the mission vice presidents from the five Adventist health systems in North America, December 17 and 18, 2013 at Loma Linda University. The statement was adopted by the North American Division at its year-end meetings, December 2014.*