



Covenant Health

*Compassionate care led
by Catholic values*

Mission

We are called to continue the healing ministry of Jesus by serving with compassion, upholding the sacredness of life in all stages, and caring for the whole person – body, mind and soul.

Vision

Covenant Health will positively influence the health of Albertans and be of greater service to those in need by working together with compassion, quality and innovation.

Values

As a Catholic organization, we are committed to serving people of all faiths, cultures and circumstances, according to our values:

Compassion
Respect
Collaboration
Social Justice
Integrity
Stewardship

Mission Integration Tool Kit

"By what power or by what name did you do this?"

Acts 4:7

We are proud to offer this Mission Integration Tool Kit to support Covenant Health leaders, staff, physicians and volunteers understand the foundational elements of our new organization. Understanding these foundational elements begins first with unfolding the meaning of our name, Covenant Health, as well as the significance and implied behavioural standards that accompany our mission, vision and value statements.

Although they are merely words, they are nevertheless powerful in building community and guiding decision-making. What matters is how these words are lived out in action.

Giving a name to someone or something is an intentional act. It is not done casually, without thought. The birth of a son or daughter, for example, invites parents to reflect on their hopes and dreams for their child. In the Bible, often the name given to another was intended to signify the person's very essence. There are over a thousand references to "name" in the scriptures, from the Hebrew word *shem* or the Greek word *onoma*, underscoring the biblical significance and power in naming not only the child, but also our expectations and hopes of what God will do through the person.

Similarly, the naming of an organization is an opportunity for leaders to reflect on the meaning they believe will signify the essence of the institution's *character*, or preferred culture. Our name, Covenant Health, and our corresponding mission, vision and value statements were chosen with these intentions. They are meant to convey the rich tradition of our Catholic healthcare ministry, and the convictions we profess and are called to uphold. Although they are merely words, they are nevertheless powerful in building community and guiding decision-making. What matters is how these words are *lived out* in action.

Standards of performance and key indicators based on our values are being developed to ensure deeper integration and fidelity to our mission. We offer these series of reflections to help become more familiar with our name and values, pointing to their deeper scriptural and contextual meaning.

While our mission is the cornerstone for everything we do, this tool kit focuses on breaking open the deeper meaning of the name and values of Covenant Health only, with the assumption that the mission, position statement, tag lines and vision summarize what is reflected more fully in our values and Covenant Health brand name.

We encourage you to share these reflections with your staff and to invite their feedback and examples of where they see the mission, vision and values lived out in Covenant Health. For more information or to support you in facilitating discussion of our foundational statements, please call:

Vice President, Mission, Ethics and Spirituality
Covenant Health
(780) 735-9596



The Meaning of Covenant

Understanding the Significance of a Covenantal Relationship

A covenant is a special relationship between parties. It is more than a contractual or one-sided arrangement, but rather a relationship built on mutuality, binding agreement, and enduring promise. In its deepest meaning, a covenant is about fidelity, deemed both irrevocable and permanent.

For example, when we speak of a covenantal marriage we refer to a relationship of profound trust calling couples to faithful witness of mutually exclusive love, ending only in death. The theological foundation of human covenantal love is the covenant established by God with His people, beginning with Abraham and reaching its definitive fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

God called Abraham and all his descendants to fidelity, to trust in God's sacred and enduring promise. However, as finite and imperfect beings, members of the human family were unable to respond perfectly to God's offer of love. In response to human weakness, sin and failings, God intervened time and time again, until finally, "in the fullness of time", God sent his Son to become one of us. Jesus Christ, both fully God and fully human, is at one and the same time the perfect revelation of God's faithful love and the perfect human "yes" to God's offer of life and salvation.

This is why Jesus is the new and everlasting Covenant. Through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's faithful love has broken fully into our lives, restoring us to Himself and thus to right relationships with one another, and lifting people up in their brokenness. God continually calls people back to the fullness of covenantal relationship in Christ, promising His presence, protection, forgiveness and guidance along our life journey.

As a Catholic organization, Covenant Health affirms the foundational belief of our faith that God is with us always, and no more so than in times of illness and suffering. We are stewards of this saving God's love, called to lift up our brothers and sisters with hope when their bodies may fail, or mental illness clouds their ability to see their way clearly, or questions of spiritual meaning and purpose overwhelm their spirit. We are collaborators in the healing ministry of Jesus, the New Covenant, who through his cross and resurrection, definitively renewed the covenant of God's enduring love.

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A Practical Love

We are more than Covenant Health in name only. We are called to *be* a covenantal people in action, mirroring the faithful presence of Jesus by standing with, and walking alongside those who are hurting and alone. Such practical love is at the heart of the Gospel, oriented to care of the whole person, in body, mind and soul. Following the example of Jesus, and with the help of his grace, we listen closely to the person in our care who longs not only for a healing hand, but also a healing word of encouragement and support.

We participate in God's saving work by putting into action, in eminently practical ways and with quality programs and services, our values of compassion, respect, collaboration, social justice, integrity and stewardship.

We are Covenant Health by virtue of our lavish attention to all, demonstrating through our behaviours and measurable standards of performance profound respect for the human person and the diversity of traditions and cultures we serve, knowing that human illness knows no partiality.

We can be a covenantal people because we have first been loved unconditionally by God. With God's grace and following Jesus' example, we respond to human need with faithful and unconditional service. Whenever we profess our name, we bear public witness to what we hold to be true – that God is with us always.

Key Statements

- Our name, Covenant Health, speaks of giving witness to God's faithful love before all those we serve.
- A covenant is more than a contract. Covenant refers to mutual commitment, a binding agreement, an enduring promise.
- We are Covenant Health as evidenced by our unconditional service to people of all faiths, cultures and circumstances.
- Inspired by the example of Jesus, and sure of God's promise of enduring love, we are Covenant Health by striving to respond, in grace, with unconditional love and faithful presence to those we serve
- As Covenant Health, we are stewards of God's love and mercy. We do not seek to treat just body and mind. By caring for the whole person, and attending to the deeper questions of the spirit, we nurture the soul and help bring people closer to God.
- As Covenant Health, we participate in a greater Mystery. We are called to carry on the healing ministry of Jesus in our own day and context, and with the resources and gifts entrusted to us. As such, we rely on God's covenantal grace to sustain us in our ministry.



Questions for reflection

What does Covenant Health mean to you?

If someone asked you what Covenant Health meant, how would you explain it?

What personal examples do you have that help express the meaning of covenant?

Our Values

What do our values compel us to do?

By definition, values are those qualities of attitude or behaviour we consider important. As a Catholic organization, we hold six core values of critical importance that define who we are. These values should govern all our behaviour, attitudes, actions, and decisions. Our values are the means by which we operationalize or make tangible our mission in practical and everyday ways. They are the intersection between what we say we are as an organization, and what we *do*. Standards of performance and behavioural indicators are being developed to demonstrate, in a measurable and concrete way, our mission in action.

Compassion

In its fullest meaning, the word compassion means “to be like in suffering” and is closely related to empathy. While we may be technically proficient in the delivery of healthcare, our values call us also to be proficient of the heart – to recognize and respond with empathy and unconditional regard to those who suffer. Very simply, our value of compassion compels us to treat others as we would like to be treated. Being compassionate, then, presumes we understand our own human needs and vulnerabilities; only thus can we be sensitive to the needs and vulnerabilities of others. Although we cannot cure all people, or reverse the infirmity of aging, we can nevertheless create a healing environment through compassionate and empathetic care. In as much as we create a place of refuge so that those who are ill and suffering feel embraced, as depicted in the two halves of our logo, we witness covenantal love.

Mark 1:40f; Mark 10:51; Luke 4:40; Luke 10:30-37; Romans 12:15; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, *Deus Caritas Est*, #31a

Respect

All of us are created in the image and likeness of God, and thus have an incalculable worth and intrinsic dignity that no one can ever take away. “Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary” (His Holiness Benedict XVI). Therefore all people are to be treated with profound respect, regardless of their circumstances, physical and cognitive ability, race, religion, gender, or socio-economic status. We believe in the dignity of all persons, from conception to natural death, and all our services must be aligned with respecting and defending human dignity along the full continuum of life. As part of a *consistent ethic of life*, we are called to demonstrate respectful behaviour with every human encounter, and in every circumstance.

Genesis 1:26; Luke 9:47-48; John 10:10; *Inaugural Mass of Benedict XVI, April 24, 2005*

Collaboration

Each of us brings unique perspectives, experience and wisdom in discerning how best to respond to the health needs of the people we serve. We are called to collaborate not only with those external to Covenant Health, but also with those across our own programs and services, disciplines, geographic contexts, and cultural realities. We recognize there are others who share our mission, ethical traditions and core values in which collaborative relationships are not only possible, but essential. Together with others we can achieve more than on our own.



Ultimately, we are called to collaborate with and follow the light of the Holy Spirit in discerning a moral vision for healthcare.

I Corinthians 12:8-10; I Corinthians 12:28-31; Ephesians 4:11-13; Romans 12:4-8

Social Justice

In keeping with the rich social justice tradition of the Church, we are called to work in partnership with others to build healthy communities, recognizing that health is defined more broadly than treating disease. A call to social justice compels us to be conscious of *how* we achieve our aims. We believe the moral test of Covenant Health is the way we treat the most vulnerable and disadvantaged persons, whether directly or indirectly impacted by our ministry. Concern for social justice and pursuit of the common good in our decision-making also requires us not to overlook basic health needs when allocating resources.

Wisdom 9:2f; Isaiah 32:16-18, *Health Ethics Guide 134*

Integrity

We are called to put into practice what we profess to be true. A consistent ethic of life requires us to demonstrate decision-making practices that are congruent with our mission and organizational values so as to preserve the integrity of spirit when faced with difficult choices.

Ultimately, we cannot ensure quality and instill trust without first demonstrating integrity in all our words and actions. Covenant Health is committed to integrity even when it may not be expedient, believing honesty carries the greater moral weight. Integrity calls us to “do good, and avoid evil” and to live in right relationship with ourselves, with others, and with God.

Matthew 5:13-16; Amos 5:14; Matthew 5: 1-12, Luke 23:39-43

Stewardship

To be a steward is to be entrusted with a precious gift. As Covenant Health, we believe we are privileged to walk alongside people in their illness and suffering, and by being fully present, to offer hope. We are stewards of God’s covenantal love, and are therefore called to be courageous in risking our own vulnerability. We are stewards of our financial, human, capital and reputational assets, and must use these resources wisely to ensure the sustainability of our mission into the future. As stewards, we hold onto lightly the gifts given us, knowing our prosperity is grace, and that it can never be taken for granted. We sense the urgency not to postpone the doing of the good; rather we do what we can to invest our energy and talents today for the glory of God. Our entire healthcare ministry is a call to stewardship.

Matthew 25:14-23; II Corinthians. 9:6; Revelations 21:1; Matthew 13:44



Questions for reflection

What values correspond or ring true with you the most, and why?

Where do you see evidence of us living our values in Covenant Health?

What role do you see yourself playing in ensuring our behaviours and decision-making are congruent with Covenant Health’s values?

Facilitation

Practical Suggestions

- Use these reflections and recommended scripture passages as content for your sessions.
- Wherever possible, build on existing departmental meetings and work within the norms and customs for convening such types of conversations. There is no one right way.
- Invite staff to provide feedback regarding their understanding of the name, mission, vision and values, and how it relates to their site and clinical/managerial/front-line experience.
- Discuss how the mission may tie in with their former mission statements, and whether a need exists to create a subsidiary statement.
- Capture any feedback received and invite ongoing conversation or comments. This should also be forwarded to the Vice President, Mission, Ethics and Spirituality.
- Consider some fun exercises – for example, creating a mnemonic or use flash cards to help identify and articulate the meaning of our values.
- Keep it simple. Integration of the name, mission, vision, values will come in stages. To come across as overly prescriptive may thwart integration.
- Keep the message personal. If you are genuinely engaged, there is greater likelihood participants will as well.

Prayer

Jesus, healer of all, help us to be a partner in your healing ministry, finding ways to enhance the life and wholeness of others. Link our passion with courage and our caring with persistence that we may find innovative ways to enhance the lives among us and those we serve. Make us one people, a community entrusted with your covenantal love.

Amen.
