



Chair's Report to the Members at the Annual General Meeting of June 22, 2021

As we all can appreciate the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021 was one of the most challenging in the thirty-three-year-long history of The Vitanova Foundation. Beginning on April 1, 2020---less than three months after the passing of our founder, Dr. Franca Damiani Carella, and about ten days following the first impact of the pandemic---the 2020-2021 fiscal year saw the complete conversion of operations to virtual means: in programming, in board work, and with respect to interagency contacts, including the entire process by which Vitanova was successfully re-accredited in August 2020 by a virtual review team from the Canadian Centre for Accreditation.

While all that was transpiring, we developed---after consultation with a broad range of stakeholders---a new strategic plan to guide the direction of the organization for the next three years. The strategic priorities it sets forth are worth your consideration:

To reflect the community we serve, in order to better engage the moral, reputational and financial supports of its increasingly diverse members, policies to achieve this priority have been created and are expected to bear fruit in the months and years ahead.

To be a charity of exceptional reputation. How charities earn and retain a good reputation is a question much asked in the past year. For a very long time, Vitanova benefitted from the excellent reputation our founder earned (at Villa Colombo, with VitaSana Magazine) prior to her founding of Vitanova in 1987. To sustain and enhance that reputation, Vitanova will be pursuing a second form of accreditation, by Imagine Canada, which focuses particularly on not-for-profit corporations that are also charitable organizations.

To be financially secure is one priority that has gained in importance over the course of the pandemic. Thanks to the support of LIUNA Local 183, we have weathered what we hope is the worst of the storm, but be assured your board appreciates that post-pandemic, we cannot continue to do things “the old-fashioned way”, that new means of generating donations and raising funds are needed if we are to move ahead.

To offer high quality programs supported by superior operational functioning. Vitanova is a pioneer and still the standard when it comes to comprehensive, in depth, evidence-informed approaches to alcohol and drug use and abuse. That achievement can only be sustained and enhanced by good “back of office” practices which we will be reviewing over the course of the plan.

To employ effective succession processes. Our founder hired her successor many years ago and mentored her over the intervening years. We appreciate the importance of effective succession and have, as a result, raised it to the level of a strategic priority.

I thank our executive director, Cindy Cepparo, and her staff for what has been a year of stellar responses to extraordinary challenges.

Respectfully submitted,

A.J. Grando

Chair

