1. **Background**
   After the Second Vatican Council laypersons, at least initially, began to become involved as members of advisory boards; at the same time, the number of available members of religious orders began to decline. The duties of sponsorship became more identified with serving on the board of directors and establishing policy, rather than with the actual delivery of services. Works acquired a civil recognition distinct from that of the sponsoring religious community. Two-tiered governance structures developed making clear the distinction between the members of the corporation and the board of directors. Relations between the members and the board were governed by the use of **reserved powers**.

   These changing governance structures enable the Felician Sisters of North America to remain involved as Sponsors in their ministries, but not in the day-to-day operations of the institutions. As Felician Sisters disappear from our ministries and serve only on boards, as mission leaders, or as sponsors at a distance, their authority becomes limited to control over specific decisions. In other words, broad influence has shifted to focused governance.

   Our Lady of Hope Provincial Council, as Sponsor, through the civil governing documents of its sponsored ministries, has safeguarded its canonical duties of faith and administration through the reserved powers they hold under those documents. The Sponsor has charged Felician Services, as the incorporated ministries’ Sole Corporate Member, with the responsibility of assuring that all incorporated ministries are in conformance with all the canonical obligations of the Sponsor as stated in those governing documents. Felician Services assumed this role for each of the Felician Ministries in which Felician Services serves as the Sole Corporate Member under the governing documents effective November 21, 2009.

   Sponsorship by the Felician Sisters and conformance with its canonical duties are assured through Felician Services and the civil structures in place. Through sponsorship, the Felician Sisters give support and the use of its name and reputation to a ministry as it carries out its mission as a Catholic education/healthcare/social service ministry. The ministry, in return, affords the Felician Sisters an opportunity to fulfill the mission of the Congregation by providing education/healthcare/social services in accord with its values and mission and those of the Roman Catholic Church.

   On behalf of the Our Lady of Hope Provincial Council, Felician Services serves a designated governance role for all sponsored ministries in which it serves as Sole Corporate Member which is consistent with both canon and civil law and which fulfills the responsibilities of sponsorship. Felician Service governs in order to provide communication between the local ministry, the Felician Services Board of Directors and the Our Lady of Hope Provincial Council while protecting the Sponsor in its canonical obligations.

2. **Sponsorship**
   Sponsorship of a ministry is a formal relationship between a recognized Catholic organization and a legally formed entity, entered into for promoting and sustaining the Church’s mission in the world.
Ministry sponsors are canonically accountable for the continued viability of an apostolic work and for supporting its mission. Sponsors act formally and publically in the name of the Roman Catholic Church and are entrusted to serve the Church by guiding and overseeing a specific institutional ministry. Felician Services has been charged with these responsibilities on behalf of the Our Lady of Hope Province.

For a ministry to be carried out in the name of the Church, six conditions must be met:

a. **Spiritual Purpose** – The work must have a spiritual purpose. Canon Law speaks of lay institutes participating in the pastoral mission of the church through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

b. **Answer to a Need** – A work carried out in the name of the church must answer a need.

c. **Sufficient Means** – The undertaking must have sufficient means to achieve its purpose. The necessary means are not limited to financial assets; a spirit of faith and willingness to work diligently are also part of the necessary means.

d. **A Certain Perpetuity** – Works carried out in the name of the church are expected to have a certain perpetuity. We are not involved in fly by night operations.

e. **Stewardship** – Those who have been thus “entrusted” are to carry out their tasks as good stewards, caring for the work and its assets.

f. **Quality** – A sixth and most important characteristic is mentioned in Canon 806, i.e., if the name of the church is to be attached to a specific undertaking, the work must be one of high quality. If an activity is not of the highest quality, serious questions should be asked about whether or not it should continue.

3. **Reserved Powers**

Reserved powers means that the sponsor carries out its governance responsibilities by reserving some powers that give the sponsor exclusive canonical control over certain key areas of the sponsored organization (Source: Catholic Health Association of the US, 2004). Reserved powers are identified in your ministry By-Laws.

   a. One of reserved powers in your by-laws addresses Canonical Obligations. **Canonical Obligations** – To approve any acts of extraordinary administration under the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church. Further discussion of extraordinary administration is included in item 4.

   b. A summary of all of the reserved powers contained in your By-Laws follows below.

4. **Administration of Temporal Goods**

Acts of Extraordinary Administration are identified in the section of the Felician Sisters Congregation Constitution entitled **Administration of Temporal Goods (see below)**. The attachment includes some explanations and interpretations of the reporting requirements. Please contact your Felician Services Senior Ministry Advisor if you should have any questions.