

October 7, 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

“*Partnering*” is the operative word across the healthcare continuum today.

That came through loud and clear at recent Premier meeting of hospital CEOs in Washington, DC. My fellow CEOs and I learned from experts, like the point person for White House healthcare change, Nancy-Ann DeParle, and legislators who created the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (a/k/a/ “*Healthcare Reform*”).

Back in Naples, we are putting “partnership” to work, as we welcome the well-known and respected **Anchor Health Centers**—54 physicians, 12 nurse practitioners, 8 physician assistants and over 300 colleagues—to the NCH family. Together since 1997, these competent and compassionate care givers serve more than 100,000 active patients. Our affiliation with Anchor follows our recent alliance with the Naples Heart Institute, with its 10 physicians, 2 nurse practitioners, 3 physician assistants, and 42 colleagues, who joined NCH on March 1. As we work with our new colleagues to meld cultures and operating systems toward our mutual goal of providing the best possible care for the most people focusing on prevention, we will change the face of healthcare in our community.

Our partnering efforts here in Naples reflect similar initiatives across the country to promote more efficient use of scarce healthcare resources and more effective care for patients. Indeed, we have begun our partnership journey with strong local support.

- We have a governance structure initiated, led and managed by physicians.
- We have a hospital system Board which understands the urgency to evolve from a traditional inpatient model to a comprehensive healthcare system focused on prevention.
- We have a strong, informational technology backbone through our robust partnership with Cerner.
- We have a committed community, which has encouraged NCH progress since creating our not-for-profit hospital in 1955.
- And most importantly, we have over 3,700 competent and compassionate colleagues working together.

The kind of change we are experiencing isn’t easy. Indeed, we will have many different methods of health care delivery as we evolve. People have different healthcare needs, which demand alternative solutions. Consequently, we will continue to practice in a pluralistic healthcare environment. As Mrs. DeParle of the White House puts it, “*Anyone who works on health policy for more than half an hour sees how tough it is. Healthcare has constant innovation and delivery needs constant innovation also. The payment system is the hang up.*”

Accordingly at NCH, we will work to convert the payment system from one compensated for high volume to one rewarded for high quality. In healthcare economic terms, we are evolving from fee-for-service to global payments for episodes of care or for long-term chronic care. This means working to rid the system of chronic waste, which benefits no one and, in fact, puts our country at a tremendous global disadvantage.

By partnering with all our colleagues we will continue to enhance our community’s health care quality, capacity, and eliminate much of the 25% of waste and inefficiency in our country’s healthcare system. We welcome anyone who embraces our values of quality and efficiency and our ethics of professionalism, selflessness, and responsibility—patients, physicians, nurses, care-givers of every kind, other organizations and our wonderful community.

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D., President and CEO

P.S. Feel free to share *Straight Talk* and ask anyone to email me at allen.weiss@nchmd.org to be added.