

December 2, 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We started *Straight Talk* more than four years ago, as a means of keeping the NCH family informed about issues and successes and items of mutual concern. Initially, I was worried there would not be enough interesting news or opinions to share. Was I ever wrong! I now have so many associates sending emails, engaging me in stimulating conversations, and telling me interesting stories—that there's not enough space in this every-Thursdays commentary to fit it all in. This week, let me offer three stories shared with me recently. Each is about supporting our surgical patients.

- **Joe De Bellis** is the creative and inspirational leader of the Transportation Department, which completed more than 143,000 trips within both hospitals last year. Traditionally, the primary role of transporters was to push patients around the hospital, a challenging task given the condition of many patients and the equipment their condition mandates. Joe and his associates have augmented the department's role to include patient food nourishment replacement, with transporters stocking nursing unit pantries during downtime. Transporters also replenish all the linens and are involved with receiving and distributing many other hospital supplies.

And that's not all. Among Joe's proudest accomplishments has been training some transporters to perform EKGs (cardiograms), in collaboration with **Maria Bravo** of Cardio-Diagnostics. All NCH transporters are also CPR-certified, capable of beginning life-saving measures if needed. That's a great story of above-and-beyond accomplishment.

- Equally formidable is our Perioperative Team of more than 175 members, who care for the almost 12,000 patients undergoing surgery each year on both campuses. **John Rogers'** downtown teams are led by RNs **Pam Alexander** (open heart), **Susan Brown** (general and vascular), **Vanessa Ebrite** (neurosurgery), **Dawn Hutchison-Finucan** (urology and da Vinci Robot), and **Gary Kriger** (orthopedics). North Naples leader is RN **Deborah Ellis** and her team are about to receive recognition at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement in Orlando this year as they share their story of dramatic improvement for turnaround time between cases and prompt first case start time.

Both campuses have da Vinci Robots which utilize minimal incisions to expedite recovery from hysterectomies, prostatectomies, and other operations.

- Finally, there is our Community Blood Center, which ensures rapid transfusions when need is critical. Aply led for 25 years by **Sheila Phillips**, this donor center is a resource for the whole community, including NCH and Physicians Regional. The blood donated in Collier County stays in Collier County; we don't buy blood. Our community is a generous one, but we can always use more donors.

The Community Blood Center completed a major conversion this year to an electronic and almost paperless system, using internationally recognized bar code symbols. Two weeks after conversion, we had a surprise visit from the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB), which awarded us three commendations for "exceptional and novel" achievement.

There you have it: Three surgical support groups, working together to help all of us serve the community's healthcare needs. So keep those *Straight Talk* cards and letters and emails and conversations coming in. And thanks for all you do.

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](mailto:allen.weiss@nchmd.org) to be added.