

# Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



September 21, 2007

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

What is most disheartening – and infuriating – about the outside attempt to unionize NCH is the union’s central – and bogus – claim that the quality of care we deliver is somehow “*inferior.*”

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The latest proof of NCH quality care came earlier this week when the National Research Corp. named the NCH Healthcare System a *Consumer Choice Award Winner* for 2007/08.

This is the 12<sup>th</sup> year NRC has identified hospitals which patients have chosen as having “the highest quality and image” in 190 markets throughout the U. S. This year’s survey included a representative sample of citizens from our area who identified NCH as having the best overall quality, best nurses, best physicians and best image or reputation.

This is the first time NCH has been so honored in this prestigious, independent national survey.

This distinction is yet another reflection that the single most important priority of our caregivers is saving and improving the lives of people in our community. And the quality of that NCH care is recognized not only locally and regionally, but nationally as well – which makes the union’s claims to the contrary even more ludicrous.

As to the union challenge, we began hearings this week before the National Labor Relations Board, which are expected to last into next week. The hearings center on the SEIU’s attempt to restrict voting only to nurses who work downtown or at North Naples. Our view is that the vote should be free and open to all RNs at NCH – those at the infusion center, wound care, blood bank, Marco Island Urgent Care, and so on. This would be more democratic and fairer. But the union wants to limit voting and is fighting our attempts to allow all who will be affected the right to vote on their future.

Meanwhile, the hearings are not, as you might expect, being held here in Naples but rather in Miami. After the NLRB set the hearings in Miami, we asked to move them Naples. The union opposed our attempts to move the hearings.

So there you have it. On the one hand, NCH is honored by local consumers as a top choice for healthcare. And on the other hand, you have strangers arguing in a city 125 miles away that NCH healthcare is inferior. Go figure.

The important thing is that the vast majority of us who work here understand the truth. As this Consumer Choice award reaffirms, NCH is a great healthcare system. And we really don’t need a union to make it even better. Most important, every NCH employee must have a voice in our future as we continue to serve the community so successfully. I’m personally committed to that principle. And I’m grateful for your support and your efforts in delivering award-winning, high-quality healthcare.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allen".

Allen S. Weiss, MD  
President and CEO