

# Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



November 24, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Today is Thanksgiving Day, and we have so much to be thankful for—and so many people to thank.

A prime example is this message recently received by our Board's Human Resources Committee Chairman, **Wayne Mullican**. I've edited this to protect the patient's privacy:

*"My wife and I spent a week in the caring embrace of NCH. We met when I was in law school and she was getting a BS in nursing. Having had a number of hospital experiences—two knees, a hip, and a spinal fusion—we have had experience at Johns Hopkins, Hospital for Special Surgery and other fine medical centers. The care we had at NCH measured up to the best experiences we have had anywhere. All types of services, the administrative, the creature comforts and, most importantly, the medical attention, were exceptional. As a former Johns Hopkins Board member and a pharmaceutical industry executive, I have been exposed to doctors and the medical experience generally. You can assure your colleagues that you are providing a premier level of service."*

I shared this grateful note with the leadership team by email on a Sunday afternoon shortly after witnessing other good things our colleagues do daily. Chief Nursing Officer **Michele Thoman** responded with these metrics: *"Quality scores are the best they ever have been (falls at a low of less than 3.0 per 1000 patient days and pressure sores less than 0.3%, no central line infections for over a year) as well as patient satisfaction scores (from a mean of 51 in 2008 to a mean of 68 now)."* While our work is never done, and we can always do better, we do have a great deal to be proud of.

Chief Medical Officer Dr. **Aurora Estevez** shared the following about our three outstanding cardiac surgeons: *"The Society of Thoracic Surgeons National Coronary Artery Bypass Graft Database is the definitive quality standard for open heart surgery. Ratings are based on mortality, morbidity, and adherence to best practices that are measured for 94% of the cardiac surgical programs nationally. NCH has received the highest possible rating (3 stars) for July 2010-June 2011. This places NCH in the top 10% in the nation for care of the cardiothoracic patient and clearly sets NCH and the Shick Heart Center apart from other hospitals."* Congratulations to Drs. **Dennis Stapleton, Scot Schultz, Robert Pascotto Jr.**, and the entire team on receiving this "gold medal" equivalent.

Earlier this week, in another kind of "thank you," we distributed \$2.67 million dollars among our colleagues. This was a Board-designated 2% bonus to every employee in good standing who has completed at least 500 hours of service and 195 Key Contributor awards of \$1,000 each. In response, the following opinion appeared on our website for employees' comments and questions:

*"After hearing negativity regarding the 2% bonuses and lack of raises this year, I would like to express my appreciation for having the privilege of working for a company that values their employees and offers bonuses even during a down economy. I believe that many who have been here for a long time have gotten used to being treated extremely well and may not know what it is like outside of NCH. Having recently worked for other companies, I fully appreciate how well I am treated at NCH. I never received a bonus or a raise at my previous company even though my performance was well above average. And the benefits they offered were far less comprehensive and more expensive. No, NCH is not perfect, but the choice to stay here is easy for me. We are all fortunate to have a job and we are even more fortunate to be working for a company that offers bonuses even in the midst of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression."*

Finally, a special thanks to those who protect our country every day—from the intelligence community to those men and women on the front lines—so we might all live, prosper, and enjoy good health and fortune in a safe environment where freedom is cherished. *Happy Thanksgiving Day.*

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allen".

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.