

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most

December 15, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

NCH is growing – both physically and professionally. And the past week was no exception.

Last Thursday, we opened 32 new rooms on the 5th floor of the Baker Tower at the North Naples Campus. Within hours, each room was filled. Next month, we plan to open the 6th floor, which will take the North Naples Campus from 261 to 325 beds, and the entire NCH Healthcare System to 715 beds. That will place NCH in the top 5% of the nation's 6,000 hospitals. And we're not finished by a long shot.

While we grow, we also improve. For example, we have moved back into the Neuroscience 6 South floor on the downtown campus, after upgrading this space to help patients recover from strokes, neurosurgery, and other neurological conditions. Each unit is designed with new technology focused on quality, safety and patient comfort. Our compassionate and competent nurses and their support colleagues can already sense how this revitalized environment has positively affected patients and their families.

Growth also comes through the 26 nursing managers who participated in a year-long leadership and management course which dealt with many of the non-clinical aspects of caring for patients. NCH clinical managers are very knowledgeable about nursing due to their many years of experience. Typically, nursing schools don't teach "*leadership*." The purpose of this course was to share best practices on managing a unit so that patients and families receive optimal care, while colleagues enjoy the satisfaction that comes from helping others.

This past week, we also began our transition to Radisphere Radiology, with Dr. **Park Hand** as Interim Medical Director and Dr. **Peter Franklin** as Chairman of Radiology. They preside over seven other on-site radiologists, supported virtually round-the-clock by more than 45 Board-certified colleagues, credentialed at NCH and located throughout the nation. Radisphere (www.radsphere.net) is a proven success with a mature, high-quality program. Radiology patients and clinicians will continue to be well-served, as we add new interventional neuroradiology procedures and services such as electronic notification of abnormal results on a physician's handheld device. To patients and clinicians, the transition to Radisphere has been seamless.

An essential part of our growth comes from our attendance at important industry learning events, such as the recent Institute of Healthcare Improvement meeting in Orlando, where NCH had 40 participants and the *highest number of posters (18)* of any institution in the country. I received some wonderful notes from our participants, two of the most heartening from nurses **Nicole D'Amico-Shaal** and **Deborah A. Bouchard**. Nicole said she was proud of "*all the improvements NCH has been making*" and since leaving the conference, "*I feel part of something much bigger than my job.*" Deborah wrote that she couldn't "*begin to describe what an amazing experience it was for me*" and how she felt "*renewed and excited about nursing again.*" That's the kind of spirit that makes NCH the great institution it has become.

Last Saturday, I got that same kind of positive reinforcement as I approached mile two of the Shark Shootout 5K run. (*Surprise*: I placed in my age group!) An equally fast young woman raced by and called out, "*Go NCH!*" Turned out it was **Caroline Jones**, a dietician at NCH, who after only seven months on the job, said she *loved* working here. I told her, I've been at NCH for 34 years, and I *love* my job, too. And I'm especially proud of my colleagues, who keep this fine institution growing and improving for our community every single day.

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.