

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



October 19, 2007

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This week, we realized another milestone in the history of NCH.

NCH Healthcare System was ranked the number one hospital in Florida for cardiology and cardiac services, according to *HealthGrades Hospital Quality in America*, the largest study of its kind. (HealthGrades ranks virtually all of the nation's 5,000 hospitals.)

This is a tremendous honor for our system and brings us closer to realizing the vision statement we established seven years ago: *"To be the finest integrated health care system in the United States."*

In fact, as I look back on discussions with the Board of Trustees in 2000, I recall conversations where trustees wondered if our system would ever merit an award – any award.

Today, seven years later, the statewide and national recognition of NCH's quality of service is indisputable. And the awards, which started in 2002, just keep on coming. There are now 30 separate distinctions noted on our website (www.nchmd.org).

Ranking number one in the HealthGrades Study is particularly prestigious and noteworthy. Florida is the 4th largest state in the union with many fine hospitals, including five distinguished medical schools. Despite the competition, NCH still ranked as having the best outcomes for both the medical and surgical treatment of cardiac diseases, including myocardial infarcts (heart attacks), congestive heart failure (too much fluid in the body), angioplasty (opening up vessels), and cardiac surgery.

According to three years of objective data of all Florida hospitals reviewed by HealthGrades, a patient with heart disease being treated at NCH has a better chance of survival than the state average. You can learn more about the HealthGrades study at its website (www.HealthGrades.com), where three million potential patients visit each month.

We were also informed recently that we are the 2nd busiest hip and knee replacement hospital in Florida and the 7th busiest in the nation. We expect to move up this ranking, as new orthopedists join our team. Just another example of how far we have come.

These awards by themselves are nice, but far less important than what they reveal about the quality of care at NCH. We are saving lives, decreasing pain and suffering, and making a difference in our community. That's what a good hospital does, and we're doing it.

I'll say it again. The keys to our success and recognition for quality are teamwork, collaboration and trust in each other as we serve the community. There is no need to change what is clearly working. Our colleagues and caregivers are the ones who should take pride in these accomplishments.

As we continue to do the right thing by serving our patients and our community, I have no doubt that the recognition and the milestones will continue to come.

Respectfully,

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

Allen S. Weiss, MD
President and CEO