

# Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



October 26, 2007

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This week, I'd like to talk about the future. Specifically, "*What does NCH want to be in five years?*"

That was one of the questions we pondered at a course on hospital strategic planning that I was privileged to attend this week at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School for Executives. At Wharton, executives from the nation's most prestigious hospital systems openly discussed the challenges we all share – namely, meeting rising expectations from patients, employees and physicians, while dealing with more uninsured patients and a growing number of safety, quality, operations and compensation issues.

At NCH, our traditional goals were to expand and be competitive. And while we can never be satisfied, it's fair to say we have met both objectives with great success. But what do we want to be recognized for in the future? What are the procedures or competencies in which we want to excel?

Recently, we have received state and national recognition for our cardiac care and orthopedic volume. We have a growing reputation for treating prostate cancer with different modalities, and our quality is superior in many other clinical areas.

In 2000, we shared with the NCH Healthcare System's Board these three overall goals: (1) Demonstrated Quality, (2) Operational Efficiency, (3) Fiscal Responsibility.

Yes, we have largely delivered on each one. But to paraphrase a current business book, "*What got you here, won't get you there.*" We must continue to evolve, grow, change and strive to be more efficient and effective. Being *efficient* means accomplishing more with our time, materials and money. Being *effective* means doing the right thing for our patients in attitude and activity.

The challenge is to develop and execute on key strategies to continue to set NCH apart. To help in that pursuit, the NCH Board will soon appoint both a nurse and non-nurse employee to the Board.

Over the coming months, we will share the evolving NCH strategic plan with all of you for your feedback and input. Discussing, sharing, communicating, understanding and adjusting our plans are all part of what will continue to make us a successful team. So, too, will continuing to share the tangible (salary and benefits) and intangible (satisfaction) rewards that come with serving our families, friends and community.

This is the winning formula that will enable all of us to answer the key question," *What does NCH want to be in five years?*"

Respectfully,

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

Allen S. Weiss, MD  
President and CEO