

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most

October 25, 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Stroke is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. That's why we were pleased last week when the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) named the NCH Downtown Naples Hospital and NCH North Naples Hospital as the first hospitals in Collier County to be awarded the designation of Primary Stroke Centers.

Primary Stroke Center means the two NCH hospitals exhibit best practices for the care of stroke patients, according to the AHCA/American Stroke Association, whose guidelines recommend early arrival to hospitals that follow these best practices and offer emergency stroke care.

According to **Michele Thoman**, Chief Nursing Officer, *"More than 800 men and women in Collier County were treated for acute stroke in 2011-2012. NCH hospitals treated more than 650 of these individuals with state-of-the-art examinations, treatments and tests."* Michele also noted, *"NCH treated an additional 200 patients with transient symptoms of a stroke called TIA. These 'high risk for stroke' patients received testing and education on how to prevent an actual stroke and how to immediately respond should one occur."*

Stroke is an emergency, and the American Stroke Association recommends that "all patients having signs or symptoms of stroke be transported to the nearest primary stroke center or hospital with an equivalent designation, given the available acute therapeutic interventions." Accordingly, in Collier County, the public is urged to call 911 and get to a hospital within 60 minutes of the start of symptoms, in order to be assessed for the "clot-busting" medicine that can contain and sometimes reverse paralysis. The American Heart Association recommends transport to hospitals with the "primary stroke center" designation we now possess.

NCH offers newly-remodeled and specially-equipped nursing units at both campuses with staff trained in the care of stroke patients. The new Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging and Rehabilitation, an inpatient acute rehabilitation center, and many outpatient settings are available to patients through their recovery process.

We've also been spending time recently celebrating our 1,200 volunteers, who help patients and our community every day in so many ways. For example, Charge RN **Sandra Oestrike** from the 5th floor of the Baker Tower recently was confronted with a confused elderly patient who required one-on-one comforting. Sandra contacted the North Naples Volunteer Coordinator to ask for help. Shortly thereafter, Brookdale volunteer **Carol Graff** kindly held the patient's hands, sang to her (apologizing undeservedly for her voice!), and succeeded in calming down the anxious and confused patient.

Another volunteer from the North Naples Gift Shop, **Diane Van Parys**, recruited **Gloria Dudas** as a volunteer when they met at a community pool. Gloria, a nurse by training, said the volunteer position "fits me perfectly." She is now a regular volunteer on the Baker Tower 6th Floor.

The point is that we are proud of the clinical capacity that enables us to receive the distinction of Primary Stroke Center. But we are equally proud of people like Carol, Diane, and Gloria, who serve so nobly as NCH volunteers. High tech and high touch, together in a wonderful community!

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.