

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



November 16, 2007

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Caring for patients has been, is, and will always be our Number One priority.

I was reminded again this week of just how well NCH caregivers deliver the highest quality care to our patients. At this week's Department Head meeting, Chief Nursing Officer Carrie Capps reviewed our recent scores on surveys administered to discharged NCH patients. The results were heartening.

Of the approximately 2,788 patients discharged from NCH during the four-week period ending November 3, 88% of patients judged NCH care "good" or "very good." Patient surveys are mailed by Press Ganey to homes about one week after discharge. About one quarter of the surveys are returned and everyone has the option of remaining anonymous. The combination of mailing and anonymity means that these surveys are much more likely to reflect true patient opinions.

The Press Ganey company compares thousands of patients' experiences on overall service, ambience, meals, nurses, physicians, labs, personal issues, admitting, discharge as well as other areas of care.

Each nursing unit has a realistic patient satisfaction target, based on previous experience. And Carrie reported that during the most recent four-week period, 11 of 18 individual units either had significant improvement or met their goals.

That's outstanding performance. It truly reflects the level of compassionate care by nurses and caregivers for those patients and families we serve. Over the past seven years, the trend at NCH on all these surveys has been upward.

These patient satisfaction surveys echo the results of other objective assessments of NCH quality. NCH has been the recipient of more than 25 awards over the past three years.

My own view is that the only way to deliver exceptional care to patients is by combining the technical component of "care" – that is, the treatments, medicines, surgery or whatever – with the human element of "caring." Quality is reflected by the technical component, while patient satisfaction is defined by the human element. Healthcare enjoys this unique synergy of science and compassion. And NCH caregivers have done an outstanding job delivering it.

Last Friday night, NCH celebrated with over four hundred colleagues and friends who have completed multiples of five years of service. We also recognized eight Superstars whose stories have been in the *NCH Wave*. Leigh Burnett, a school nurse in Immokalee, was recognized as our Superstar of the Year. Mrs. Burnett noticed one youngster who seemed distracted and wouldn't remove his hand from his mouth. She investigated and discovered the student was in constant pain from untreated cavities. The dental problem was dealt with, and the student is now out of pain and back at school. This wasn't part of Mrs. Burnett's job description. But it was very much part of the "purpose" of her job, which Dr. Bertice Berry spoke about at our celebration.

Success stories like Mrs. Burnett's remind us all to take pride in what we sometimes take for granted.

Respectfully,

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

Allen S. Weiss, MD
President and CEO