

July 4, 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This July 4<sup>th</sup>, as we celebrate our nation's independence, we might also celebrate the wonderful progress we have made at NCH in helping protect and safeguard our community's healthcare. Two separate areas strike me as representative of our efforts to improve and modernize our approach to care.

- Focusing first on our *open heart coronary revascularization surgery program*, we have maintained our top rating of three stars, due in part to our 40% lower-than-expected mortality. We have also recorded exceptional performance in taking patients off the respirator within 24 hours, 94% of the time.

We have also progressed in aortic valve replacement with a two-star rating. One notable positive is our *zero* in-hospital mortality for aortic valve replacements. According to our experienced cardiovascular statistician, Dr. George Ebra & Associates, Cardiovascular Outcomes Research and Information Systems, this is "outstanding" performance.

Nationwide, open-heart cardiac surgery volumes are decreasing. This is likely due to factors including less invasive correction of clogged heart arteries by placing cardiac stents, increased use of lipid (fat) lowering medications, and overall better coordination among cardiac surgeons, invasive cardiologists (heart physicians who do cardiac catheterization and place stents which open clogged arteries), and non-invasive cardiologists who prescribe medications and life style changes to treat heart disease.

With the addition of **Dr Robert Pascotto, Jr.** and **Dr. Dennis Stapleton** to the NCH Heart Institute's 13 cardiologists, we now have a "one stop shop" for heart problems. Having a common interest in doing what is best for the patient—rather than being concerned with whether open heart surgery, stenting, or medical care may be more rewarding for the physician—improves the way we treat patients in southwest Florida. Simply said, we are creating the best value for the patient by doing only what is appropriate.

- A second major focus is our quest to bring our entire healthcare system *digital*. NCH was recognized as being "Most Wired in 2012" due in large part to our collaboration with our information technology partner, Cerner. This month we intend to be almost completely digital, all the time.

Through our Secure Intelligent Medical Online Network (SIMON), we will place orders electronically; deliver clinical notes digitally; share current medications instantly with patients, physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other professionals as appropriate; and discharge patients with a printed set of instructions. Clinical communication will improve markedly as we evolve from a mix of handwritten and digital to all-digital. Our able new Medical Director of Clinical Informatics **Dr. Tuan Nguyen** leads our effort to continue in the utilization of computer technology.

No wonder *Becker's Hospital Review* has named NCH for a second year in a row, one of the "100 Great Community Hospitals." This award is based on hospitals' quality of care and service to the community. (<http://www.beckershospitalreview.com/lists/100-great-community-hospitals.html> )

Yes, there is much to celebrate this Fourth of July. Have a safe one and don't forget to honor the men and women in the armed forces, both uniformed and not, who keep us secure.

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D., President and CEO

***P.S. DO YOU HAVE A COLLEAGUE OR FRIEND WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THESE UPDATES?***

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