July 11, 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Florida is making significant across-the-board progress.

That was the key takeaway message at the recent annual meeting of *Leadership Florida*, a 33-year-old organization dedicated to bringing together—to discuss issues of overriding importance—about 500 state leaders, including mayors, other elected officials, university presidents, leaders from not-for-profits, bankers, lawyers, professionals from the for-profit sector and other "*movers and shakers*" from around the state.

Gov. Rick Scott, who hails from Naples, shared an overview of the impressive progress our state is making across a wide spectrum of areas. I had the opportunity, along with Florida House of Representatives member Richard Corcoran from New Port Richie, and Florida Blue CEO Pat Geraghty, to participate in a panel focusing on one key area, the future of healthcare for Florida.

I began the discussion by citing two overarching strategies for healthcare's future, based on a review, *Ensuring a Healthier Tomorrow*, from the President and CEO of the American Hospital Association, Richard Umbdenstock (http://www.aha.org/content/13/healthtomorrow-summ.pdf).

The first strategy, "Promoting and rewarding accountability," has six primary components.

- 1. Accelerate payment and delivery system reforms to realize goal congruence among patients, payers, physicians, and hospitals.
- 2. Eliminate preventable infections and complications, which are among the leading causes of unnecessary death and higher healthcare costs.
- 3. Advance the use of health information technology and electronic health records so medical information is available real-time, which will improve quality and safety.
- 4. Promote transparency of quality and pricing information so everyone can make better-informed decisions.
- 5. Engage individuals in their own healthcare. (Smoking, obesity, and sedentary lifestyles account for 40% of premature deaths in the United States.)
- 6. Better manage advanced illness, so patients and families can make informed decisions before there is a crisis.

The second strategy, "Using limited health care dollars wisely," also has six components.

- 1. Eliminate non value-added treatments, as more care doesn't necessarily mean better care.
- 2. Modernize federal health programs, including consideration of increasing the Medicare eligibility age to 67.
- 3. Revamp care for vulnerable populations. (5% of patients use about 50% of the care.)
- 4. Simplify administrative/regulatory processes so that all insurers use the same standard automated claims.
- 5. Reform the medical liability system to emphasize evidence-based medicine as a healthcare "safe harbor."
- 6. Promote self-care to confront obesity, smoking, diabetes, and heart disease (which account for 75% of all healthcare spending).

Leadership Florida presented a challenging yet hopeful future for our state. The work that we do in healthcare encompasses perhaps the most critical aspect for our communities, ourselves, and the generations who succeed us.

Respectfully,

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

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