

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



December 7, 2007

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Creating a comprehensive cancer center in Southwest Florida has always been an on going long-term goal of NCH. And this week, we took a major step in making that goal a reality.

On Tuesday, Florida Cancer Specialists, a group of nine medical oncologists, began leasing a large portion of office space in the NCH Regional Cancer Institute's Lutgert Oncology Pavilion West.

Dr. Andy Lipman of NCH's Southwest Florida Hematology and Oncology Specialists will be joining forces with FCS in Lutgert West. In announcing the new relationship, Dr. Lipman said, "This alliance increases the caliber of cancer care in Collier County from what was already a high level. Patients with cancer in and around our county will have greater access to enhanced resources, which should help reduce the stress that a cancer diagnosis inevitably creates."

During a renovation period at Lutgert West, Out Patient Infusion Services (OPIS) will combine with the North Naples Campus Infusion Services to continue to serve patients. When the renovation is complete, a portion of the building will house OPIS downtown as well as serving as a meeting place for the weekly Cancer Conference.

Bringing Florida Cancer Specialists into NCH's Regional Cancer Institute centralizes services for patients and moves us even closer to becoming a more comprehensive cancer center. From here, we will begin to add services as well as look to major research and teaching institutions for further development.

This step toward a cancer center exemplifies how NCH intends to evolve as our environment changes. Working together with our physicians and our care givers is the best long-term prescription for growth and sustainability of our hospital and for steady improvement in healthcare quality for our community.

Speaking of our community, I had a revealing conversation this week with Mr. Ernie Bretzmann, the Director of the United Way of Collier County. Ernie confirmed, sadly, that the current level of economic stress in our area has caused an increase in domestic violence, child abuse, and the number of those in our community who are under Baker Acts -- court orders to protect patients who may be harmful to themselves or others.

This disturbing news should remind all of us, who are thankfully more fortunate, of the special obligation we have as caregivers and also the importance of giving to those who don't have as much as we do. This recognition is especially important at this holiday time of year.

As a team, we enjoy the satisfaction of "contributing" all year long to the betterment of people's health. Together we can continue to contribute.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allen".

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