

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most

October 31, 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

An annual event at NCH is the gala NCH Ball, where we celebrate our community, honor outstanding team members, and raise funds for a critical cause. This past Saturday's 55th NCH Ball at the Ritz-Carlton Beach Resort celebrated the expansion and renovation of the Pediatric Emergency Department at the North Naples Hospital.

By way of background, the ER at North Naples opened in 1994 and was initially designed to handle 15,000 visits annually. Today that number has risen to more than 50,000. Our growing community now has more than 80,000 children under age 18. This past year NCH served a record 17,000 children in the North Naples ER, an increase of 33% since 2008. The design of the new ER separates children from adults. The facility includes 12 patient rooms, two trauma rooms designed for children, and a pediatric waiting room with a state of the art entertainment center to engage children of all ages. The overall benefit from this expansion is that the new facility allows us to treat more children closer to home.

On Saturday, we announced a \$6 million gift from our wonderful Board Chair and her family, officially christening this facility the **Robert, Mariann, and Megan MacDonald Pediatric Emergency Department**. This is the MacDonald family's second large gift to NCH, and the standing ovation they received from the 500 attendees was richly deserved. The MacDonalds have truly helped change the way we care for children in southwest Florida.

In terms of our annual honorees, the *2013 Physician of the Year*, sponsored by Herb and Mary Ehlers and voted on by the medical staff, resulted in a tie with **Dr. Deborah Lopez** and **Dr. Alberto de la Rivaherrera** both receiving the accolade. **Drs. Paul Jones, Ken Plunkitt, Carlos Quintero, Dennis Stapleton, and Justin Warner** were also recognized as well-deserving honorees. The *2013 Nurses of the Year* were **Elizabeth Foster** and **Stephen Taylor**. And 2013 *Compass Award* winners, nominated by NCH employees for compassion, were **Drs. Damian McGovern** and **Charina Yango-Cadavos**. Congratulations all for your extraordinary work.

The evening's unsung heroes were the Ball Committee organizers, led by Co-Chairs Sen. Garrett and Mrs. Diana Richter, along with Auction Chair Pat Schultz and Sponsorship Chair John Clough. Mrs. Mary Jane Briggs served as this year's Honorary Ball Chair. We are so fortunate to have Mrs. Briggs and her incredible family in Naples. The Briggs family has supported NCH and our community in so many ways for over half a century. The family's contributions are monumental, including most recently the Beatrice Branch Briggs Founders Park and John N. Briggs Wellness Center. We are privileged to have all of these generous leaders in our community.

The 55th NCH Ball was an evening of inspiration and synergy. The national healthcare environment may be maddeningly uncertain, but here in southwest Florida, we enjoy the constant of a competent, caring community that takes seriously its obligations to maintain and sustain high quality, local healthcare. NCH would not be what we are today without the support of our community. In this regard, all of us who live and work here are truly blessed and perpetually thankful.

Respectfully,



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

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