

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



December 28, 2007

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

In this final *Straight Talk* for 2007, as we set our vision for the year ahead, I thought I'd take a quick look back at the lessons learned and promises kept in the year just past.

It is not an understatement to conclude that 2007 has been “*spectacular*” for NCH in being recognized as the quality leader for health care in the area. Among the accolades we received this year, being named #1 in the state for cardiac care as well as being the 2nd busiest hospital system for hip and knee replacement have been wonderful accomplishments. Both are measures of lives saved and discomfort avoided.

So, too, should the fact that employee satisfaction this year rose in November to the second highest rating in our history. I like to think that, at least in part, this was a reflection of the administration increasing its focus on *listening* to your suggestions and *acting* on them whenever possible. Meanwhile, we continue to await a decision by the National Labor Relations Board as to who will be included in the union vote and when the vote will take place.

Regardless of the union challenge, I can commit to you that in the New Year, continued communications in both directions and among all parties – patients, families, nurses, those who support nurses, other care-givers, physicians, Board members, the community at large and administration – will remain a top priority. *Around the Clocks* and *Straight Talk* are two good ways of sharing information. Adding both a nurse and non-nurse employee to the Board will be another effective way of securing input from those who care.

Another key in 2008 will be practicing what companies call “transparency” – sharing both the good and bad as we move forward. Transparency is another key to building trust. As I have said many times, none of us, most especially yours truly, is perfect. While we all try to do our best all the time, there are occasions when we wish we could start over again. What I can pledge to you is that in the New Year, I will make a special effort to keep you informed as to important matters that impact NCH and affect your role.

Finally, one thing that won't change in 2008 is our priority on quality – in terms of patient service and operational efficiency and in terms of financial strength. These values have served us well in the past. They lie at the heart of our vision and strategic plan. And it is important that all members of the NCH family understand these core competencies, so that we can build on them in the New Year.

It has been a great year for NCH in serving our community. For that, I thank you all. And I wish you and your families, a healthy and happy New Year.

Respectfully,

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

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