

July 17, 2014

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The new arrivals are here—and all 18 of them are beautiful and gleaming. And we couldn't be more proud!

No, they're not babies—they're bassinets. And the proud "parents" in this case are North Naples Hospital COO and System CNO **Michele Thoman**, Director of Women's and Children's Services **Bernadine Hinton**, Nurse Manager Neonatal ICU (NICU) **Cathy Ravelo**, and our colleagues from DeAngelis Diamond Construction, who earlier this week announced the birth of our spanking new 18-bassinet NICU.

Although five weeks premature (delivered early, which in this case is great) and under budget (which is even greater!), the 8,700 square foot unit looks lovely and is well equipped to care for the most innocent and vulnerable new members of our community. Parents (real ones) will appreciate the comforts, as they will be able to stay with their newborns for as long as they choose. Meanwhile, our five full-time (and soon to be six), 24/7 in-house, Board Certified neonatologists and 31 neonatal nurses—three of whom just joined the team—will be on round-the-clock duty for the estimated 3,200 babies born at the Birth Place each year, some of whom will be requiring specialized additional care.

Pediatric capabilities at NCH are second to none in our area. Our infant mortality, birth weights, and full-term delivery metrics are excellent and rank well compared to state and national metrics. We have a full lactation support program in addition to prenatal classes taught in multiple languages. Moreover, the Birth Place is the only hospital in Collier County with full obstetrical services including 24/7 in-house anesthesia, capacious blood bank, robust lab, and comprehensive ICU.

Today's NCH capacity stands in sharp contrast to the practice years ago, when we had to send many more newborns out of town, which was disruptive for families and not good for babies. That all started to change when **Dr. Jorge Perez**, Director of Kidz Medical Services, joined NCH in 2009, enabling us to care for smaller and sicker babies locally with excellent outcomes. Dr. Perez's extraordinary team has since expanded our Pediatric services to include Pediatric subspecialists in Cardiology, Pulmonary, Gastroenterology, Neurology, Sleep, Ophthalmology and soon Hematology/Oncology and Urology. Our new pediatric urologist will be the first on the west coast of Florida south of Tampa. Add to this our 18-room MacDonald Seacarium, with a new Robert, Mariann and Megan MacDonald Pediatric Emergency Center under construction and you can readily see the role NCH plays in ensuring the quality care of our younger patients right here in their own community.

All of this progress is testimony to the dedication and excellence of our 60 pediatricians (32 active, 6 associate, and 22 consulting), who are passionate about caring for the almost 63,000 children 18 and under in Collier County. Equally critical, our donor community continues to be more than generous; lead donors for the NICU include Craig and Patricia Jilk, the Pastore Family Foundation, and all of our friends who supported the 2012 NCH Hospital Ball by providing funds for 10 Giraffe OmniBeds. These very sophisticated isolates costing about \$45,000 each allow neonates to stay "cocooned" and warm while being cared for by nurses and physicians.

Net/net, as the bankers say, we have many to thank for our superior pediatric service in Collier County, which just keeps getting stronger and more comprehensive. As our number of deliveries and sophistication expand in coming years, we anticipate ascending to the next higher level of neonatal ICU care. Stated another way, we fully expect our happy pediatric "family" to keep right on growing. And for that, all of us are so thankful.

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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