

January 18, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Today, let's take a break from the on-again/off-again union election and talk about five important developments that occurred this week.

(1) Medical Staff Meeting. One highlight of this week's quarterly meeting, led by Dr. Jeff McCartney, was a discussion of the multidisciplinary rounds, to check quality and safety, in our intensive care units. These include a nurse presenter, intensivist, respiratory therapist, dietician, social worker/case manager, pharmacist, and other caregivers. Patty Anzalone and Dr. David Lindner started these quick reviews recently in the North Naples ICU. Similar rounds are occurring a few days a week in the SICU downtown, and we intend to expand the process to the rest of the ICUs and PCU. Ultimately, many of the med/surg floors might benefit from similar clinical reviews.

(2) Nurse Additions. I was mistaken in last week's *Straight Talk* to refer to the "recent addition of 30 nurses at NCH." The real number is 48. Included are many new grads -- graduate nurses scheduled to take their state exams to become RNs -- as well as core, seasonals and travelers. Since our volumes are up, we're fortunate to have staffed up nursing to as robust a level as we've had in recent years. In spite of the hard economic times for the state and nation, since October our overall volume is up 1.5%. That's the good news. But with expenses also rising, we have to be prudent while we continue to work together.

(3) Medication Administration. Error prevention using bar codes for identification of medications, patients and nurses had a spectacular start on the downtown campus due to *wonderful* cooperation by the bedside nurses. The first day had an over 70% compliance with a goal after time being over 85%. SICU had 100% compliance shortly after they started. While time is not saved, patients are safer while nurses can be more comfortable that they are preventing errors.

(4) North Naples Tower Signage. At long last, after permitting and fabrication, the North Naples Tower has a magnificent NCH sign and logo visible for miles around. Walter Tester, our new facilities manager, is on the case with this and other projects. The North Naples ORs have recently been upgraded with new air conditioning coils and control valves. This improvement will provide a comfortable environment for all. New automatic door openers are being installed in several areas. Construction and site work for the North Naples campus will begin in February. The end product will provide more parking that is user friendly as well as beautify the whole North Naples Campus.

(5) Board Nominating Committee. The Board of Trustees Nominating Committee has begun deliberations to select a nurse and non-nurse employee for one-year terms on the Board. Other Board Committees will also add nurses and non-nurse employees to help ensure transparency in all that we do.

Finally, before this Sunday's football games, you might consider watching Jeff Lytle's *One on One* show at noon on Channel 8. His guest is me, and his questions cover just about everything we're working on at NCH. So it might be worthwhile viewing. Then again, you might just want to watch the pre-game shows! (I won't be offended.)

Thanks, as always, for the positive spirit and continued commitment. The new NCH year has started with a gallop.

Respectfully yours,



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