

February 8, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I'm pleased to report that NCH Healthcare System has earned yet another distinction. But this one is different.

This week, NCH received the first ever **Diversity Award** from Hodges University, one of Florida's finest private universities. We received this honor for "*innovative leadership in employment diversity which has enabled continued excellence in Human Resources. We work better when we stand together.*"

When you review the rationale for the award, the diversity at NCH really is quite astounding. Nearly half of the new moms in our Labor and Delivery unit are primary non-English speakers. Our 3,500 colleagues speak more than 40 different languages.

Our employee base includes about 150 people who are certified translators. We have been teaching English on campus to anyone in the system who wants to improve his or her skills. And our own Simon Blanco has been teaching Spanish for since 2002. (I know because I'm one of Simon's perpetually struggling students. Lastima!)

We even have a machine, housed in the North Naples ER, which supplies simultaneous translation from 150 languages to English. This program is called MARTTI, which stands for "My Accessible Real-Time Trusted Interpreter."

For many of us, our parents or grandparents came from other lands. (My own mother was born in Russia.) America has always been a welcoming nation. Diversity is one of our great strengths. And it's a primary reason why the U.S. generates 20% of the world's gross productivity but represent only 5% of the world's population.

Part of our continuing challenge at NCH is to be compassionate to those patients and families unfamiliar with our language and for whom our hospital environment creates stress.

Speaking of compassion, you really should see the powerful DVD our Educational Department is sharing, which presents various real scenarios in hospital settings where patients, families and caregivers solve common problems. We plan showings of the DVD on February 20 downtown and at our other campuses shortly thereafter. I hope you'll find time to attend.

In light our current and difficult national and local economy, the need for all NCH personnel to show compassion in all that we do has never been greater. Most Americans understand, as the NCH Diversity Award puts it, "*We work better when we stand together.*"

Respectfully,



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