

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



February 21, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I know this is not Friday afternoon as has been our customary time for sharing *Straight Talk* for the past year, but we thought **Thursday** would be a more convenient time for everyone to receive and share *Straight Talk*.

The readership of *Straight Talk* has increased and the editors at the *Naples Daily News* reprinted the recent issue on the Diversity Award from Hodges University to NCH. This is a credit to everyone involved and we appreciate the *Naples Daily News* sharing a nice story.

Having said the above, we still need to work on our communications, as some of our wonderful clinicians still were unaware this week that we are in a search for a new CNO. We want to remain in maximum listening mode as we go forward and, equally important, we want everyone to understand where we are today and what our vision is for tomorrow.

With the above in mind, I have a new topic to share with you – our physician relations – and a review of another important one – nurse and non-nurse employees on the Board.

We need to look forward to working more closely with all of the 580+ physicians on the medical staff as well as those who practice in the region. Going forward over the next three to five years, those physicians and hospitals that collaborate to care for patients and the community while being prudent with limited resources (insurer's payments, supplies, etc.) will add value and be successful. The current system of independent hospitals and physicians will be stressed as costs continue to climb and payments shrink.

Recently, discussions have begun of how best to collaborate in the future with each other and NCH. Importantly, everyone involved agreed that including all the physicians on the staff of NCH as well as any other interested physicians in the community in any collaborative model would best serve everyone—patients, community, physicians, group practices, nurses, and the hospital system. This is just the beginning of a process that will be monitored by the NCH Board. Any changes must be fair for all concerned and we will encourage participation from anyone who is interested. So far, not much has happened other than we are going to come up with some models to add value for all concerned. We will share developments as they happen.

Speaking about participation, the Nominating Committee is reviewing more than 20 applications for the nurse and non-nurse employee seats on the Board. This will be announced at the March 26, 2008 Board meeting. Having high standards of behavior, integrity, good judgment, common sense as well as the ability to communicate well are all characteristics needed for this volunteer job.

Please do remember, that when one is serving on the hospital board, his or her role is to represent the community we serve. Having a background as a caregiver helps tremendously, but the Board members are there to represent the community.

Thanks for taking the time to follow the developments at NCH. We have plenty of news to share, and we will continue to do so.

Respectfully,

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

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