

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



July 17, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The key to any successful operation, be it a hospital or a retail store, is **feedback** – from all constituents. This week, I'd like to turn to the raft of feedback we've received recently from patients, physicians and colleagues.

Let me start by sharing this lovely poem from a patient who was escorted to the Garden of Hope and Courage on the downtown campus as part of a new volunteer initiative. Our volunteer provided the patient with a detailed tour of the Garden, which resulted in the following:

“THE GARDEN”

*We went to the garden/Peace flowed all around/The noise of the water was a beautiful sound.
The plants in their beauty share “Life is for Living”/The statues around reflect others giving
The bright sunshine warms us, as the clouds drifted by/White and fluffy, high in the blue sky
The soul feels the healing/In part of the plans of the walk in the garden/A garden peaceful but grand.*

There is little more rewarding to a caregiver than a satisfied patient.

As to **employee satisfaction**, here, too, we seem to be making progress, judging from our confidential employee satisfaction survey. Over the past three months, the satisfaction trend has improved overall and, in particular, with supervisors and department directors. As always, issues emerge that need attention, ranging from “*stress about job security*” to “*need more time at the bedside instead of running around like crazy.*” We also receive our share of encouraging comments from “*At work my opinions seem to count*” to “*I always have help if I don't understand something.*”

The point is that we carefully study the results of these surveys and read every comment, looking for patterns so that we can respond to employee needs.

This week, we also received results from the annual confidential **physician satisfaction survey**. Dr. Jeff McCartney, president of the medical staff, has tracked our averages over the five years we've surveyed the NCH docs and reports an all-time high in most of the satisfaction parameters. Here again, anonymous comments range from helpful thoughts to a few acerbic observations not suitable for a family newsletter. But again, we read them all and act on recommendations that can help us improve.

Another bit of feedback I received this week was, frankly, discouraging. Engineering reported that someone had purposely stuffed plastic garbage bags and paper towels into the loading dock toilet, causing an overflow.

Obviously, there's a bad apple or two in every bunch. Hospital reports can range from Engineering's disappointing experience to a patient's inspiring reflections of the Garden of Hope and Courage. I am tremendously encouraged by the vast majority of people who serve at NCH. And despite the very infrequent anti-social act or less-than-kind comment, I continue to welcome—and take seriously—your feedback to make our hospital an even better place for us to work and care for our patients.

Respectfully,

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

Allen S. Weiss, M.D.