

# Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



July 24, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Why is it that some of us enjoy our work more than others? Why do some of us perform better with patients and are more respected by our patients? And why do some of us feel more fulfilled?

The fact is that most of us have the intellectual and technical skills to do the important healing work we have been hired to do. So why the differences in performance and attitude?

For answers, I turn to the writings of psychologist Daniel Goleman and, in particular, his terrific book, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. Goleman says four personal qualities—initiative, empathy, adaptability and persuasiveness—have a lot to do with how we perform and how happy we are in our work.

Here's how these four factors have come into play just recently at NCH.

- **Initiative** was the watchword at our lunch Monday in the North Naples ICU. Nurses and caregivers discussed the recovery of four patients in cardiac arrest, who were placed on whole body cooling to 92 degrees for 24 hours. Dr. Robert Tober, head of EMS for Collier County, cited a *New England Journal of Medicine* article that noted this new technique provides a better chance of recovery. Our NCH team took the initiative to start this technique using conventional cooling blankets until specialized new equipment becomes available.
- **Empathy and adaptability** were the solutions later in the same ICU discussion, in terms of our recent low census and difficulty in securing enough shifts for our core nurses and support people. We agreed that adapting by sharing extra shifts or floating to areas where we are also competent, rather than awarding overtime to some, was more empathetic and fairer for all.
- Finally, **persuasiveness** was the theme at a recent breakfast "Greet, Meet and Eat." John Harper, a pharmacist of 40 years, hailed his experience with merit pay based on evaluation by co-workers. After a hesitant initial period, he said most people warmed to the idea and worked more closely together—not knowing whom among their co-workers would become their evaluator. The idea of creating and sustaining a team based on meritocracy (merit-based compensation) is certainly food for thought here at NCH.

The real point is that how we interact with each other and the patients we care for will ultimately determine success at our hospital—and in our own lives.

Respectfully,

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

Allen S. Weiss, M.D.