

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most

August 14, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Our quest for quality continues to succeed.

This week NCH was recognized for the third year in a row as a Thomson Reuters 100 Top Hospital Performance Improvement Leader in the large community hospital category. The largest independent and objective healthcare information provider, Thomson Reuters analyzed 2,867 hospitals nationwide using detailed empirical performance data over five consecutive years (2002-2006).

There are five categories of hospitals: Large academic, small academic, large community (that's us), medium community and small community. The eight metrics on which the award is based are:

Risk-adjusted mortality index	Severity-adjusted average length of stay
Risk-adjusted complication index	Expense per adjusted discharge, case mix & wage-adjusted
Risk-adjusted patient safety index	Profitability (adjusted operating profit margin)
Core measures average percent	Cash to total debt ratio

The Thomson Reuters report praised NCH for its *“long-term strategies for strengthening performance”* as well as a medical staff and leadership teams that have *“focused on improving quality, efficiency, use of evidence-based medicine and financial stability in order to better serve their patients and communities.”*

Propelled by our Board's vision, NCH has instilled a true culture of performance improvement. And this award recognizes that we have improved hospital-wide performance consistently, year-over-year, at a substantially faster rate than our peers across the U. S. This is a splendid accomplishment for our hospital and all the caregivers—nurses, physicians, technicians, therapists and non-clinical team members—on whom our community depends. The recognition belongs to everyone for the hard work and dedication from those who care everyday in everyway. Please accept our heartfelt thanks from the Board and executive team.

One year ago, when we were also part of the roster of the 100 most-improved hospitals, I said in that newsletter, *“We are by no means satisfied with being better than 99% of the nation's [large community] hospitals. Our goal is nothing less than achieving zero tolerance for poor care. We understand we are only at the beginning of this journey to excellence.”*

Yes, we should all be proud of this latest accomplishment. But the award is not nearly as important as the lives saved and the complications avoided, even while we remain prudent with our resources.

The quest for quality and our journey towards excellence continues.

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D.