October 16, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Florence Nightingale, the 19<sup>th</sup> century pioneer in nursing and hospital reform, was a "nurse's nurse."

As RN Deborah Selman put it last week, "Florence Nightingale set an example of compassion, commitment to patient care, and diligent and thoughtful hospital administration." Deborah's comments were inspired by Chief Nursing Officer Linda Gipson's remarks at one of the 10 half-day educational sessions shared with more than 900 nurses and hundreds of others over the past two weeks. The sessions, organized by Dora Krauss and her team (Sue Graziano, Jon Kling, Lou Lafemina, Sue Manning, Jennifer Ringle, Holly Teach, Gina Teegarden, and Susan Theroux to name a few) included workshops to educate everyone on the prevention of hospital falls, urinary tract infections as well as other care improvement areas.

Linda Gipson's remarks resonated. Linda has been our CNO for just about three months. In addition to helping care for patients in a wide range of clinical situations, she has spent a great deal of time listening to the concerns and suggestions of her fellow nurses. From those discussions, Linda formulated a plan to "jump start" our caring operation and culture to one that embraces a professional practice environment consistent with national standards and results—what we've dubbed "Operation Nightingale."

Obviously, we're starting with a strong base of highly competent and caring professionals. Our challenge now is to enhance our mission-supportive culture, by integrating American Organization of Nurse Executives principles, high performance teams, shared governance, common practices system-wide, continuous nursing education, establishing a professional recognition ladder, and other positive attributes. Our goal is to continuously improve our quality while sustaining a positive contribution margin.

This is a tall order, but we can accomplish it, says Linda, by relying on the "4 P's"—**pride, professionalism, passion** and **purpose.** Stated another way, what is good for patients is good for nursing and good for NCH. The point is that a modern physical plant, which we are fortunate to have here at NCH, certainly helps—but it is personal care that really matters. Linda pointed out that in her career, she had assisted craniotomies in tents and open-heart surgeries in trailers. It's people who care for patients. And with Operation Nightingale, we are returning to basics and remembering why we went into nursing and healthcare in the first place.

One way we do that is by embracing the positive attributes of "Magnet" hospital status as our goals.

Magnet status includes 14 "forces of magnetism": (1) high quality nursing leadership, (2) relatively flat organizational structure with unit-based decision making; (3) supportive, participative management; (4) sensitive and sensible personnel policies; (5) increased nurse responsibility and authority for patient care; (6) high quality patient care as an organizational priority; (7) structures to measure and improve quality; (8) using unit-based knowledge experts; (9) autonomy of nursing practices; (10) partnerships with the community and healthcare organizations; (11) emphasis on teaching; (12) encouragement of high esteem; (13) promotion of interdisciplinary relationships; and (14) professional development.

In addition to these critical goals, practices and behaviors, we'll incorporate refinements in structure, measurement and shared governance—all of which I'll review in *Straight Talk* next week. Operation Nightingale is that important to all of us and to our patients.

Respectfully,

Allen S. Weiss, M.D.