

January 1, 2009

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Happy New Year!

Traditionally at this time of year, we make New Year's resolutions that we hope to keep. Here are three that I'm intent on realizing in the new year, and that I would hope all of us would consider as well—to make ourselves, our community, and our NCH system even better in 2009.

These resolutions can be summarized in three words: **Transparency. Education. Excellence.**

- **Transparency.** What I mean by being transparent is sharing data, information, and knowledge with those around us, honestly and openly. There is no substitute for honest feedback. We can't change or improve unless we are all open to the truth. Transparency is also important with family and friends. Honestly assessing both good points and flaws will ultimately improve each of us.

We've worked hard to improve the transparency at NCH in recent years. We regularly share results on quality and finances with the medical rating agencies, our Board of Trustees, local media and, importantly, with our own internal NCH community. Two examples are the posting of patient satisfaction scores and the results of door-to-balloon times for Save-A-Heart patients. Obviously, there are times—such as during negotiations—when silence is the best policy. But our clear intent as a management team is to promote transparency.

- **Education.** We must continue our education. Think back to what you were doing five years ago. Now consider your present professional activities. Next try to imagine what you will be engaged in five years from now. Most of us will visualize three different pictures. Healthcare is such a dynamic professional environment that "*what got us here won't get us there,*" to paraphrase author Marshall Goldsmith.

To maintain the standard that NCH has set in our community, we all need to continue our education. The average half-life of medical knowledge is but a few years. That means that half of what we believe right now is wrong. The problem is we simply don't know which half! So constantly accumulating more knowledge is an imperative for all of us.

- **Excellence.** Finally, let's all go for the "gold"—excellence in all we do. NCH is a special place in a special community. People who are engaged, active, busy, and productive are happier with themselves and with everyone and everything they touch. The four attributes that CNO Linda Gipson has stressed—passion, professionalism, pride, and purpose—are goals to guide us as we serve our community with excellence.

NCH has improved remarkably in virtually every respect over these past several years. That's a great credit to all of you. Now let's all resolve to make this an even better place in 2009.

Best wishes for a Healthy and Happy New Year,



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President and CEO