

April 9, 2009

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

In a hospital setting, **innovation** for the benefit of patients pays great dividends in terms of satisfying patients and enhancing an institution's reputation.

At NCH, we have many examples of innovation on the quality care side—from new surgical techniques, to controlling congestive heart failure, to curing pneumonia. But today, I'd like to share three examples of innovation on another important measure, **hospitality**—whether caregivers are kind and communicative, whether the environment is clean and neat, whether the environment is quiet at night, etc.

First, some background. Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) regularly measures the hospitality side of healthcare. Random samples of patients discharged from every hospital in the country are asked the same 22 questions about their in-patient experience. The two most important questions are (1) “*Would you recommend this hospital to family or friends?*” and (2) “*On a scale of 1-10, how would rate this hospital during your stay?*” Results of these surveys are shared on Medicare's website: www.hcahpsonline.org/home.aspx.

At NCH, in addition to ranking in the top 5% for overall clinical excellence, as we have for the past four years, we strive to provide every patient a “*wow*” experience in terms of hospitality. And here are the three recent innovations to make sure our hospitality is moving to the top tier as well.

- First, ICU nurses and staff have initiated mock surveys for patient satisfaction for every patient/family when they arrive in the ICU. Patients are surveyed real time so that any concerns can be addressed immediately. Results are collated, shared and addressed with the entire team. This process, created by teams of ICU nurses, is a great example of how we can use shared governance to assist patients.
- Second, the North Naples Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) now sends out greeting cards to inpatients through our website (www.NCHMD.org) in addition to calling outpatients at home the day after surgery. The team has been calling for years now. I learned about this new card sending program last week while making rounds from RN Dianne Garrison and Charity Dawley who works in IT (both also competitive runners, by the way). In addition, the PACU team— RNs Kris Andreasen, Mel Terwillger, Eileen Duff and others— are able to share their empathy that “*We're thinking about you.*”
- Third, Mason Ayres and Dan Casagrande from our NCH Foundation have created the *Guardian Angel* program, so that patients can easily honor caregivers, whenever patients and their families desire to do so. Every week, I receive dozens of such positive letters from patients about our nurses, CTs, physicians, physicians' assistants and others. The NCH Foundation came up with the idea of having an addressed envelope in all in-room patient guides, to enable patients and/or families to write a note of thanks or even make a donation to NCH. Each caregiver mentioned receives a Guardian Angel recognition certificate that identifies them as an *NCH Guardian Angel*.

These are just three of the many colleague-inspired innovations that make our institution a leader in quality care and patient satisfaction. Thank you all for that, and keep those innovations coming!

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D., President and CEO

P. S. Feel free to share *Straight Talk* and ask anyone to email me at allen.weiss@nchmd.org to be added.