

May 14, 2009

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

This is *National Hospital Week*. And I'd like to highlight some of NCH's "*unsung heroes*," in some of our less-well-recognized departments. Without them, NCH wouldn't be the high quality healthcare system it has become.

- To many of us, **John Hart** is as important as any individual in our system. John is our new downtown campus chef. He and the 118 dedicated folks in our *Food and Nutritional Services Department* are keep us all well fed, every day of the year—including meals at 11 p.m. for our night caregivers. Our two kitchens serve about 4,250 meals a day. Our approximately 500 inpatients consume about 1,500 meals. The remainder are for visitors, guests, and us. A few years ago, our menu received kudos for "value and choice" from the *Naples Daily News*. How about that: A hospital kitchen that merits praise from a restaurant reviewer!
- Keeping us clean and tidy is key for infection control. And our first line of defense against infection is our *Environmental Services Department*. The stalwarts there are constantly getting rooms ready for new patients, shining floors, high dusting, and a multitude of other functions essential for patient care. One key member of Environmental Services is **Alexis Fernandez** an NCH veteran of 29 years and an "outstanding, exemplary" staff member according to **Fritz Aschauer**, Director of Environmental Services.
- Safety is the watchword for **Rich Sauerwald**, a North Naples security officer, and his colleagues in the *Campus Security Department*. NCH has 26 security professionals, who help with everything from parking to locating patients to dealing with confused or combative patients. Campus Security's overriding goal is to make every visitor, patient and ourselves feel comfortable and safe, and they do an outstanding job.
- Information technology is the very hardy and mature platform that connects us both inside and outside the healthcare system. As we evolve from paper to digital, **Santhana Durai** and her teammates keep us in shape with the complex and rapidly changing technology.
- Quality, of course, has been a major contributor to NCH's recent success. **Dr. Tracey King**, who recently received her Ph.D., has been a leader in this journey. Tracey heads the *Strategic Quality Department*. She and her colleagues understand the data and translate the message so that all of us can work to continuously improve. The backbone of outstanding hospital care is quality. And the backbone of our focus on quality is the work of the Strategic Quality Department.
- Finally, no healthcare institution can deliver quality unless it is financially sound. Serving patients with the means to pay enables us to earn a fair living and serve our community. Keeping us financially sound and fiscally prudent is the job of **Sue Slaght** and her colleagues in the *Reimbursement Department*. Every day, Sue and her associates make sure that we are fairly compensated for the work we do.

These are but a few of the "back of the house" functions, not apparent to patients and their families but so essential for high quality care. As I have said so many times, *we are all in this together*. We need everyone—caregivers and support staff, alike—helping each other, so that we can continue to provide the best care possible for everyone in the communities we serve.

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](mailto:allen.weiss@nchmd.org) to be added.