

# Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



March 11, 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

All of us participate in surveys at NCH, all designed to make us better in delivering care to our patients.

One such survey is the anonymous *Physician Satisfaction Survey*, conducted annually for the past six years with our entire medical staff of 630 doctors. We believe in “transparency.” So we share the survey results—which have steadily shown improvement—with everyone at NCH, from the entire medical staff to the NCH Board.

While everything we hear from the docs isn’t positive, the most important thing is that we respond to the needs identified, make changes, and then sustain the improvements to benefit everyone. The 2009 survey is a case-in-point.

This latest survey identified dissatisfaction by general surgeons, Ob/Gyns, and orthopedists with the efficiency of the North Naples operating rooms. We focused on the two primary concerns: prompt starting times and turnover time which is the time between when one patient leaves the OR until the time the next patient is in the OR ready for surgery.

In response, last November we formed the North Naples Operating Room Improvement Task Force, consisting of General Surgeons Drs. **David Lamon, Sam Tunkle**, Ob/Gyns Drs. **Michael Dent, Jeff Heitman, Janice Young**, Orthopedist Dr. **Robert Zehr**, Anesthesiologist Dr. **Bruce Caldwell**, along with NCH Board volunteer Mrs. **Mariann MacDonald**, CMO Dr. **Aurora Estevez**, OR Clinical Coordinator **Diane Davies**, NNH OR Director **Sherrie Laurita**, DNH OR Director **Bill Diamond**, North Naples COO **Gail Dolan** and System COO **Phil Dutcher**.

Project Manager **Sue Manning**, along with North Naples OR colleagues, collected data, analyzed processes and codified suggestions for improvement. That led to a number of refinements, including:

- Reassigned housekeeping staff to match work to volume—*done*.
- Changed hours of night shift and started rotating the weekend staff—*done*.
- Changed start times for admitting and transportation departments—*done*.
- Obtained additional equipment to ensure availability—*in progress*.
- Improved communication with portable phones in pre-op and walkie-talkies for OR staff—*in progress*.
- Worked with our partner, Cerner, to improve computer connectivity and reporting capabilities—*still a challenge*.

This process, while still a work in progress, has already yielded gratifying results. North Naples’ *room turnover time* matched the national rates for October through December, 2009. That’s short of our goal, and short of Downtown’s turnover times, but a great improvement nonetheless. So, too, have *starting times* improved dramatically, as a result of this renewed focus. Prompt start times at North Naples have increased from 27% to 68%, which is now similar to Downtown.

The point is that we conduct surveys for the express purpose of improving our system. And when we all work together—responding to our physicians to better serve our patients—improvements are precisely what occur. What a team!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allen".

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.