

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most

April 22, 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

This past Saturday night was a bit *scary* at NCH. Well, perhaps that's an overstatement, but it's always a bit unnerving when you update your primary clinical information system, which is what we and our Cerner partners did this past Saturday.

The update is a great success, with this most current platform (or "backbone") allowing us to utilize all the enhancements of the Cerner Millennium. The systems improvement will increase our potential to move into the top tier of national hospital systems nationwide. According to the independent Health Information and Management Systems Society we currently rank among the top 120 hospitals in the country.

Clearly, the top tier hospitals of the 21st century will be sophisticated users of cutting-edge technology. Here, we rank well ahead of many others, who are coping with rising capital costs and are in the early decision-making stages on technology. NCH Chief Information Officer **Susan Wolff's** leadership with computer integration has added great value, and our partnership with Cerner has positioned us for continuous improvement.

Computer technology to record, store, share and even help with the cognitive process of diagnosing and treating patients is increasingly important for quality. That's where our Cerner partnership comes in. Four months ago, we upped the ante with Cerner. During this time we continue to migrate many of our clinical systems to the Kansas City data centers, while simultaneously several senior Cerner engineers and leaders have moved to southwest Florida. These high-level Cerner folks now have homes and families here, as we share the common goal of making our community a medical technology showcase for the nation. In fact, we've already had a few hospital systems visit us to see our system in action. We enjoy sharing our best practices with others.

Now, with the newer code in place, we can simplify the computer provider order entry process, which makes medication administration safer for patients, nurses and physicians and improves medication reconciliation. With this new code, all care givers should be able to determine the specific medications a patient is taking when they first enter the hospital, as they proceed through an inpatient illness, and, importantly, when they are discharged to go home. This will help end the confusion brought about by different medications prescribed by different physicians along the way.

The Naples Heart Institute's nine cardiologists plan to use the same clinical system to incorporate inpatient records into office charts. Our Rehabilitation and Birth Place Units are also looking at fuller computer integration with a more robust, integrated and capable system. And **Howard Cohen, M.D.**, an intensivist, plans to have his hospital follow-up notes electronically formatted, which constitutes the next major step in the paperless process.

While rounding the night of the upgrade, I enjoyed seeing **Rica Isme**, 5N night Unit Secretary, beaming as she explored the new system, right before it went "live" at 5:00 a.m. A few minutes later, 4N RN **Marisol Paz** instructed colleagues on the finer points of navigating the new screens. It was exciting to witness yet another technological change that will improve the way we practice medicine and deliver care.

Having a synergistic relationship with a world-class information technology leader like Cerner, and employing a team of sharp, intelligent and willing technology users, has created the platform that will help NCH realize its goal as a national healthcare quality leader.

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.