

October 21, 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

This past weekend brought another huge upgrade in our information systems and an important takeaway: NCH has a strong culture of learning. We adapt well, and know that we must change for the better as our environment changes.

The weekend activity with Cerner, our health information partner, continued a process begun in April, when a very successful upgrade of computer code prepared us for this weekend's sequel. These are steps toward a totally integrated electronic medical record and paperless environment. The ultimate goal is to simplify and improve documentation, which will make patient care even better. But this is a journey, and each technological upgrade is a step along that path.

As I saw firsthand, successful changes of this magnitude require both enormous preparation (focusing on education for users) and vigorous testing of code (to make sure nothing is lost in the transformation). Late Saturday night and early Sunday morning, I was particularly pleased to see how adaptable and engaged everyone was. 4N Unit Secretary Carly Roudebush was on the case, sharing her computer savvy. Clinical IT specialist RN Carol Breen bustled from location to location, answering questions. As issues surfaced, which always happens with monumental change, the combined Cerner team flown in from around the county along with our full-time, in-town IT folks, solved problems and referred suggestions to our newly formed nursing Shared Governance Committee on Information Technology.

Sunday afternoon, CNO Michele Thoman, who had monitored developments overnight, emailed the following:

• "Overall, we are doing very well with the transition to the new power chart. Spirits are high. They appreciate the IT support and at North Naples commented they have never had such high support before. Positive comments from RNs on the new med list and ability to enter in-home meds—much improved from old system."

We adapted to unexpected change and unplanned excitement a week ago Tuesday—an electrical fire behind the main electrical distribution panels on the downtown campus. An investigation to determine the cause is still underway, but the good news is that no one was ever in danger, no patients were inconvenienced or moved, and our three backup emergency power generators kicked in seamlessly. The City of Naples and North Naples Fire Departments responded beautifully.

Over the next few days, we did have some transient outages in non-critical areas as we reconnected to Florida Power & Light. Facilities Engineer **Walter Tester** brought in a fourth generator as an additional spare. FPL is now supplying about 52% of our normal power, so we will keep the diesel generators running. They are similar to locomotive engines and can run almost forever. Both our hospital campuses have full backup for every electrical function for an almost unlimited time. Living in a hurricane region, we think this is essential for proper care of our patients. Most hospitals have nothing close to this generating capacity—typically, just enough to support vital functions such as completing surgery or operating elevators.

Our environment is always changing, and in a learning culture, our people are always improving. And as you can see, the tools we use to support quality care and superior safety range from information technology to diesel generators.

Finally, on a sad note we lost a long time friend and colleague **Sally Sitta**, who was Director of Volunteers for 25 years and in later years was also Vice President and Special Assistant to the President. She touched many lives in so many ways.

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.