

# Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most

November 4, 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

***“This is My Hospital.”***

That’s the new NCH theme we have started to share with our community, on TV, in newspapers and local magazines. It’s all about the wonderful pride that all of us have in the quality care we deliver to patients, and the respect with which we hold our colleagues and members of our medical staff.

And it’s a message that’s apparently understood and appreciated by the community, according to a recently-completed, wide-ranging, statistically-valid telephone survey. The researchers tell us that locally, the name brand of NCH has comparable recognition to the world’s most well-known brands, such as Coca-Cola and MacDonald’s.

That’s high praise. But as I think about the 55 years that NCH has served the community, it makes great sense. I was eager to share this good news on rounds this weekend with the day and night teams on both campuses. Early Saturday—very early!—on the Orthopedic floor, 5 North RN **Julian Julmiste** and I talked about the “positive attitude” that he and other colleagues always seem to exhibit. Julian confirmed—a bit embarrassed—that he has been told that many times by patients and their families.

I was reminded of something Medical Staff Coordinator **Sherrie Lafemina** had emailed me earlier in the week. She shared a famous study of 678 nuns, which measured the impact of positive emotions and thoughts on longevity. Before becoming a nun, each of the 678 wrote a short autobiographical essay, subsequently coded for “positive,” “neutral” or “negative” attitude. Years later, the difference in lifespan among the participants was astonishing: *The nuns who expressed more “positive” emotions lived, on average, a decade longer than their less cheerful peers!* The study concluded that there was a direct relationship between being “positive” and living longer. Also, the incidence of Alzheimer’s disease and dementia was much lower in the positive attitude group.

And speaking of “positives,” later Saturday morning, COO **Phil Dutcher** and I had the privilege of judging the *Swamp Buggy Parade* floats. As we were chauffeured around in a golf cart by Phil’s teenage daughter, we were stopped by one member of the Mosquito Control float, Stacey Welch. Mrs. Welch reported that she had just had a wonderful patient experience at NCH, highlighted by **Adele Carroll**, diet clerk, who helped with her illness-related eating problems by reviewing food choices, making suggestions and working with our chefs to create more appetizing meals. It worked, and Mrs. Welch wanted us to recognize Adele. Way to go, Adele!

And then there was 4-South oncology unit RN **Carolyn Smith**, who on Sunday morning, greeted and hugged 21-year volunteer **Michelle Brigh**, whose positive outlook and prayer has been helping NCH oncology patients for many years. The oncology nurses raved about Mrs. Brigh and she, in turn, was so complimentary about the nurses. Again, “positives” all around.

Just like the study of the positive nuns, we all do better, live better and live longer when we help each other and think positively. Mentally and physically, being positive pays off. I’m proud that NCH is known for the upbeat attitude of its people. That is one reason why, individually and collectively, we enjoy such a *positive* reputation.

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.