

November 25, 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

On this day of Thanksgiving, we at NCH and our community have much to be thankful for.

NCH Emergency Room teams on both campuses have earned our gratitude with improved service. Over the past few months, our ER teams have streamlined the process for our patients. We have improved waiting times from an average of two hours (also the national average) to an average of 20 minutes. That's outstanding.

Most hospitals in the country have the same diurnal and weekly ER pattern. Few experience the accentuated seasonal swings we do in southwest Florida. As the "season" develops, our inpatient volume doubles—with delays generally occurring late in the day during the latter part of the week (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday), when we run out of inpatient beds. We have smart, adaptable, caring, competent colleagues in both ER and Labor & Delivery, who are experts in managing what is known as "lumpy demand"—meaning, the number of ER patients or moms about to deliver ranges randomly from none to too many at one time.

With these facts in mind, CNO **Michele Thoman** shared the following email recently:

*"I wanted to recognize the extraordinary actions of the staff copied on this email (**Gina Teegarden, Bill Diamond, Todd Haner, Jayme Roberts, Debbie Ellis, Melody Bacon** and the Bed Board) as well as the nurses at NNH. I was notified late Monday night that NNH ED was holding 11 patients with 4 more admits, while our express unit was full at 12 and all of our tower beds completely full. We knew we had a busy surgical schedule with 8 orthos and several general cases. 3W staff stepped up in the middle of their night-shift to send a nurse to the ED, to care for the holds so our ED staff could remain focused on the continuous stream of ED patients. 3W staff had to rearrange patient assignments to make this happen.*

*"In the morning we were at 16 ED holds with 1 PACU hold for a middle of the night case. All our nurse leaders and bed board staff kept calm and worked together to assist in placement of the patients. They worked together to ensure our nursing staff that we would get through the day and support them in the process. This aided greatly in keeping our staff calm as well. We had holds in the ED all day at a minimum of 11, and PACU held cases for an extended period. By 6 p.m., all ED holds had been bedded, we had all ORs placed, and express had 5 empty beds. This means that the express and med surg staffs almost completely turned the entire unit population over on their nursing units by discharging and admitting all of these ED and PACU patients. This is PHENOMENAL work, and I would like to thank everyone for their efforts to work together, remain calm and put patients first. I am so proud to be leading this exceptional team, who take pride in what they do with a 'can-do' attitude."*

That "can-do" attitude makes all the difference at NCH. And we were delighted this week to reward nearly all our 3,600 colleagues (those serving more than 500 hours without any disciplinary actions) by providing a bonus check worth 3% of their yearly pay. We also awarded \$1,000 checks to 150 "Key Contributors," in recognition of their outstanding contributions to NCH this past year. In aggregate, this increase distributes more than \$3.5 million into the community, which has a three-fold ripple effect. We're proud that NCH continues to be our community's "economic beacon." And we're thankful for the 3,600 dedicated professionals who care for our community in such an extraordinary way. Happy Thanksgiving to you all.

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.