

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most

March 12, 2015

Dear Friend and Colleagues,

Cancer diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis have changed dramatically for the better. Today, hospitals such as NCH, staffed by greatly experienced and highly competent medical personnel, are making tremendous progress in meeting the challenges of cancer.

Last week, NCH added to its prestigious record in fighting cancer, earning National Accreditation with Commendation from the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons (ACS). This highly respected, independent reviewing organization, established in 1922, awarded NCH “Silver” status and rated us “*excellent*” in six of seven categories. That placed us among the top 10% in the nation.

To earn voluntary accreditation, a cancer program must meet or exceed 34 Commission on Cancer quality care standards, be evaluated every three years through a survey process, and maintain levels of excellence in the delivery of comprehensive patient-centered care. Three-Year Accreditation with Commendation is only awarded to a facility that exceeds standard requirements at the time of its triennial survey.

As a Commission on Cancer-accredited center, NCH takes a multidisciplinary approach to treating cancer as a complex group of diseases that requires consultation among surgeons, medical and radiation oncologists, diagnostic radiologists, pathologists, and other specialists. This multidisciplinary partnership results in improved patient care.

Our team, led by **Drs. Chaundre Cross, Joel Grossman, Tim Kerwin, Sam Tunkle, Dan Morris** and colleagues from 21st Century Oncology and Florida Cancer Specialists, includes nurses from our inpatient oncology unit, outpatient infusion unit, social service, dietary, palliative care, pathology, radiology, surgical specialties and others. Cancer Registry Manager **Barbara O’Hara** keeps everyone organized and also supervises the analytics that track patient progress.

The American College of Surgeons accreditation program provides the framework for NCH to improve our quality of patient care through various programs that focus on the full spectrum of cancer care, including prevention, early diagnosis, cancer staging, optimal treatment, rehabilitation, life-long follow-up for recurrent disease, and end-of-life care. When patients receive care at an American College of Surgeons-accredited facility, they also have access to information on clinical trials and new treatments, genetic counseling, and patient-centered services including psycho-social support, a patient navigation process, and a survivorship care plan that documents each patient’s care and seeks to improve cancer survivors’ quality of life.

NCH maintains a cancer registry and contributes data to the National Cancer Data Base, a joint program of the American College of Surgeons and American Cancer Society. This nationwide oncology outcomes database is the largest clinical disease registry in the world.

Each year, nearly two million cases of cancer are diagnosed. There are currently only 1,500 accredited cancer programs in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. NCH is one of them. In fact, our ACS surveyor, a surgical oncologist for decades from the Boston area, related at the exit conference, after submitting his assessment, that he will be retiring to Naples. His closing quote to us, “*I now know I have a hospital I can come to when I’m a member of the community.*” Quite a compliment from an expert about a hospital and its almost 4,000 dedicated caregivers, who are fighting the most insidious diseases and helping everyone in our community live longer, happier, and healthier lives.

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D., President and CEO

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