

February 10, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We're four days away from Valentine's Day, so what better time to focus on the wonderful women who mean so much in all our lives.

There are truly no greater contributors to the health of our society than women. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 61% of caregivers are women, and 85% of healthcare decision makers are female. Additionally, 57% of all the wealth in America is controlled by women, which suggests their substantial influence in philanthropic decisions.

Last week, I attended a presentation on the differences between women's and men's health challenges, ably conducted by **Pat Read**, Administrative Director of Women and Children's Services, and **Dr. Shona Velamakanni**, a non-interventional Georgetown-trained cardiologist.

These knowledgeable and stimulating professionals pointed out that about one-third of life expectancy is related to our genetic inheritance, with the remainder dictated by lifestyle. They noted that what many don't realize is that the most common disease and cause of death in women is cardiovascular disease. About 500,000 women die each year from cardiovascular disease, three times the number who die from cancer. Another under-recognized disease in women is osteoporosis, aka "the silent thief," which affects more than 50% of women. The fact is that a woman has a better chance of dying of osteoporosis than she does of breast cancer. Fortunately, being informed and educated makes a huge difference: When detected early, both osteoporosis and breast cancer offer excellent prognosis.

One excellent way to prevent illness is our ongoing pursuit at NCH in *community education*. In February, NCH and 70 other hospitals across America will sponsor programs to increase awareness of cardiovascular disease and its risk factors. The goal is to inspire everyone to take action to improve their individual health, as well as their family's health, through prevention.

One inspirational program will be held this Saturday, February 12, at the Naples Beach Hotel, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It's a *National Day of Dance for Your Health* as together we take a stand against this most common killer of women, heart disease. We will also address joint health with NCH Restorative Director for Orthopaedics RN **Sue Graziano.** NCH Medical Staff members including Union Hospital trained internist **Dr. Karen Henrichsen**, Winthrop University Hospital interventional cardiologist **Dr. Adam Frank** and Georgetown-trained **Dr. James Talano** will share their thoughts about prevention, wellness, early detection, appropriate treatment, and prognosis of cardiac diseases. We'll also screen some of the expected 500 participants. As to the "fun component" of dance—which can burn as many calories as swimming, walking, or bike riding—Naples Academy of Ballet, the NCH Wellness program and others will be leading participation in Group Groove, Zumba, Group Cenergy, and Jazzercise.

Focusing on disease prevention helps improve the value of health care we deliver to the community. And just in case anyone gets hungry from all these February wellness activities around NCH, we'll celebrate on our campuses with a free for employees Valentine's Day pancake breakfast served morning, noon, evening and night by the leadership team. Happy Valentine's Day, everybody.

Respectfully,

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

P.S. Feel free to share *Straight Talk* by emailing me at <u>allen.weiss@nchmd.org</u> to be added; and join us on Facebook at <u>www.face</u>book.com/nchflorida.