

# Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



March 3, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

People may not agree about much these days, but here is statement on which there is near universal agreement: *"It's all about the children."* There's nothing more important to our society than providing a positive future for our children. This message came through loud and clear to me recently, after first attending the 11<sup>th</sup> Naples Wine Festival, which raised \$12 million "for the kids," and then more recently at the 50-year birthday celebration of the Fun Time Nursery, which does such a wonderful job with our community's pre-school children.

And that same message—*servicing our children*—is a constant priority at NCH, where we will soon offer dedicated Pediatrics ER services to complement our refurbished outpatient Pediatric Rehabilitation Center.

At the Department of Pediatrics meeting this week **Dr. Todd Vedder**, Chairman of the Pediatrics Department, and **Dr. John Lewis**, Chair of the Emergency Department, jointly introduced **Dr. Pia Myers**, who will serve as our first Director of the Pediatric Emergency Department. Dr. Myers trained and cares for children at UF & Shands Jacksonville and Wolfson's Children's Hospital. I had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Myers discuss the ambitious plans to enhance our local pediatric emergency capability, so that community children and their families can enjoy a safer, more comforting experience right here at home. This will be the latest addition to NCH's full-service pediatric care.

We currently care for about 110 children in our newly-renovated, outpatient Pediatric Rehabilitation Center, with its underwater theme, similar to our MacDonald Seacarium. Under **Karen Judd**, Rehabilitation Director, we have four physical therapists, one assistant, three speech therapists, two occupational therapists, and one professional each in Immokalee, Bonita, Marco and at the downtown Briggs Center, all for the kids.

At a ceremony for the new space for children's therapy services at Greentree, Dr. Vedder praised *"the quality, dedication and commitment of the therapists that staff Greentree, as well as their satellite offices in Immokalee, Bonita and downtown. These are also the therapists who provide inpatient care to our hospitalized children and neonates."*

This fully-integrated team helps children like four-year-old Zane, who has cerebral palsy. Certified Speech Pathologist **Lauren Rusnik** and Physical Therapist **Deborah Flanagan-Thornton**, with more than 26 years of experience, work with Zane *"so he can use his abdominals and ribcage muscles to have longer, louder sentences; use his core more effectively to sit and stand with less support; and to reach and walk with greater control and efficiency. Helping a child gain independence is the most rewarding aspect of their work."* Walking, reaching for a crayon or spoon, and balancing for muscle coordination to support his body are additional examples of how the team at Greentree is working with Zane. You can meet Zane at <http://www.nchmd.org/default.aspx?id=974>

Outpatient Pediatrics Rehab supports this NCH continuum of child care. **Charry Taylor**, OT, is one of our therapists who works in the Neonatal ICU at NCH. With more than 20 years of experience, Charry ably and immediately treats patients from early diagnoses—be it Down Syndrome, Developmental Delay, or Oral-Motor feeding difficulties—to Outpatient care. Charry says her work is *"very fulfilling...to watch a child progress and make an impact in the child's life and the life of the family is extremely meaningful to me."* Charry adds that the children she treats *"are very much our future and shouldn't be excluded or overlooked because of any disability or limitations they face."*

I couldn't have expressed the NCH commitment to local children's healthcare any more profoundly.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allen".

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

P.S. Feel free to share *Straight Talk* by emailing me at [allen.weiss@nchmd.org](mailto:allen.weiss@nchmd.org) to be added; and join us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/nchflorida](http://www.facebook.com/nchflorida).