

March 10, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This week we celebrate *Patient Safety Awareness* as a proud partner of the National Patient Safety Foundation.

No one is more important to a health care provider than a patient. Our patients are our “clients,” and our goal must be to treat them with maximum safety, concern and care. When I say, “*We are all in this together*,” I mean that at one time or another, most of us are also “patients.” So whether we are care receivers or care givers, being informed, involved, and invested as patients will make a profound difference in our health outcomes.

We have been focusing on enhanced patient care for a decade. Ten years ago, the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Quality of Health Care in America released its second landmark report, *Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. NCH embraced these best practices by creating a learning environment, employing evidence-based medicine and embracing transparency. And we have made monumental progress with a culture that values quality, safety and keeps the patient at the center of our every decision.

We continue to be committed to working together with our patient partners to provide the safest care possible. Among recent enhancements toward this goal are reengineering with modern technology such as bar code reading of all medication, computer documentation, pressure sore avoidance by early and frequent screening, fall prevention and infection avoidance by repeated hand washing. In that context, the 2011 theme of Associate CNO for Professional Practice **Laurie Zone-Smith** and her team is, *Are You In? Commit to Safe Health Care*.

What can each of us do as “patient advocates?” Well, as a care receiver you can help yourself or your loved one by actively engaging in these five areas:

- Ask questions if you have doubts or concerns.
- Keep an accurate list of all of your medications.
- Get and keep the results of all your tests and procedures and understand them.
- Talk to your physician or mid-level provider about what is best for your health needs.
- Make sure you understand your treatment, whether it is medical or surgical.

This week is also *Volunteer Week*. Our NCH volunteers are another important—even legendary—element of our patient-serving network. How “legendary?” Director of Volunteers **Amanda Smith** is proud to point out that Volunteer **Pauline “Polly” Procter** has served for 37 years, Volunteer Rose **Donnell** has served 21,500 total career hours as a knitter, and Volunteer **Dolores Varone** has served at the White Elephant since 1988 compiling 15,000 hours of volunteer service. Of such service are legends made!

Last week Amanda received a call from a patient’s wife, who wanted me to know how much she appreciated Volunteers **Marianne Kaldany** and **Dorothy Eden** for staying with her in the Family Waiting Room, during her husband’s surgery. She was touched by their compassion and friendship and their presence in her time of need.

There’s a reason why our patients respect NCH. Ours is a safe and compassionate culture that has been created by a dedicated team of care givers, working together in the best interests of our patients.

Respectfully,



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).