

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



May 19, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Our mission is to care for patients and cure sickness. Our core competency is execution; in other words, we get things done. And in that spirit, last week we celebrated National Hospital Week, “*a celebration of the history, technology and dedicated professionals that make our facilities beacons of confidence and care,*” according to its organizers.

Those ideals were showcased when Director of Respiratory Therapy **Scott Wiley** invited COO **Phil Dutcher** and me to visit recently with the 25-member North Naples Hospital Respiratory Therapy team.

These healthcare professionals add value at the bedside of our sickest patients—from premature newborns to frail, failing geriatric patients. Our Respiratory Therapy team has an average of 19.5 years of experience, with more than half of that here at NCH. The technology employed by respiratory therapy has become more and more complex, as the North Naples Campus has evolved over the past 22 years to include sicker, more complicated patients (from pre-school drowning victims to end-stage lung disease to severe congestive heart failure). But many patients who previously would not have survived now are comforted, educated, and go home intact.

Patients doing poorly and about to take a turn for the worse can be rescued by the “SWAT” team (which stands for *Stabilize While Awaiting Therapy*). Respiratory Therapists are core members of this team and many times preferred partners by nurses who along with other caregivers can summon a SWAT team in to assist a patient who is developing trouble.

Once, there were expected complications to being on a respirator (breathing machine). Today, those complications are almost gone. We have not had a pneumonia induced by a respirator in more than 15 months in any of our 58 ICU beds on either campus. The length of stay in the ICU and on the respirator is also coming down as respiratory therapists, along with Critical Care physicians and ICU nurses, move patients as quickly as possible to breathing on their own.

With these new and better abilities to change the course of disease, the sophistication and size of the equipment needed has grown markedly. Unfortunately, the respiratory therapy department’s footprint has lagged behind in size. Over the next year, as the North Naples Campus undergoes yet another metamorphosis, this essential department will be reborn in a larger, more functional area.

In other developments at the North Naples campus, we will be adding 64 new private rooms to the 5th and 6th floors of the Baker Tower. These will include six “Gulf View” rooms to match those on the downtown campus. These new floors will include an educational center/conference area on each floor with nursing stations at both ends of floor, which lessens the distance between patients and nurses. We also plan to make each of these rooms a “Smart Room” with the latest computer technology to give the patient and his/her family a safer, more educational and comfortable experience. Smart Rooms recognize whenever a care giver enters the room and shares this information with the patient. A fuller explanation of “Smart Room” technology appeared in the February 24 Straight Talk (www.nchmd.org/default.aspx?id=835). We will also be starting a project to migrate the radiology department closer to the emergency room where most of the need for X-rays arise and adding two new state of the art operating rooms.

Five years ago before the Baker Tower was started we predicted there would be construction continuously at North Naples for a decade. So far, we are right on track. Stay tuned for the latest in caring, curing and “getting things done.”

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 to be added; and join us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nchflorida.