

May 26, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Someone once said that to patients, nurses are “*angels in comfortable shoes.*” To all of us, “*nurses are the heart of healthcare.*” And nowhere is that more true than at NCH.

Recently, we took time to celebrate our wonderful nurses. CNO **Michele Thoman** delivered her 2011 *Nursing State of Department* address on both campuses, along with a short inspirational Johnson & Johnson documentary (http://www.nchmd.org/multimedia/Nursing/Patients_Perspectives_2.wmv) which captured the essence of nursing in a series of short vignettes. In the film, real nurses share experiences about making a difference. As one nurse explained, “*I just love it. I wouldn't do anything else. I've had some really bad days but there isn't a single day I went to work which was a wasted day. This is where I need to be.*”

NCH has 1000+ nurses, 60+ LPNs, 450+ Care Technicians, Behavioral Health, Emergency and Operating Room techs, and Unit Secretaries. 85% of our nursing leaders have master's degrees with a total of 216 years of leadership experience. Our current nursing vacancy rate is at an all-time low of 2%, down from almost 11% in the fall of 2009. We rank well with the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators for educational levels. We fall short only in the relative percentage of nurses with a bachelor's degree. To remedy that, our educational benefits program will pay the tuition for colleagues who have been with us for more than a year. Studying with a full workload, of course, is tough. But so are our nurses, who heroically manage work and family while continuing their education.

Thanks largely to our nurses, we have improved quality in many areas, among them:

- Prevention of pressure ulcers from over 12% almost a decade ago to a current low of 0.5%.
- Zero restraint use in all medical/surgical units, Psych, and Rehab with the national average in the ICUs.
- Zero ventilator associated pneumonias in all 58 ICU beds for 15 months.
- Marked improvement in central line infections in ICU, with one unit having no infections for 15 months.
- No eye infections in the neonatal ICU for five months.
- Operating Room first case start times on time, markedly improved and better than the national average.
- Pneumonia and Flu vaccination, both core nursing measures, are good and trending better.
- Patient satisfaction focused on communication, responsiveness, pain control, medication explanation, and discharge instructions—all trending better.

Finally, the seven councils of Shared Governance have made incredible progress this past year. The *Practice Council* has removed latex from our environment, changed the type of very small needles we use, revamped our transfer at shift change policy, and is engaged in continuous improvement. The *Information Technology Council* continues to enhance the way we document and review patient medical records. *Recognition, Retention, and Recruitment* has developed a career ladder and introduced the *Daisy Award* for extraordinary nurses. *Quality/Safety* has created dashboards for each unit to measure success and know where we should concentrate our efforts. *Research/Evidence Based Practice Council* is working with the nursing satisfaction survey, central line infection prevention, and doing a pilot study for diabetic diets. *Professional Alliance* is reviewing our road map to Magnet status, and our *Educational Council* has focused on our web page and in facilitating access to patient educational materials. Wow! Thank you—**Nurses Care Here!**

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