

September 22, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Next week is my five year anniversary as President and CEO of NCH. I've been reflecting on all that has happened since Ed Morton retired, after 35 successful years at NCH, and I was given the privilege and pleasure by the Board to succeed him at the helm of the premier medical institution in Collier County. Here's what comes to mind.

- **First, I've learned that *culture* trumps strategy every time.**

That's not to say that strategy isn't vitally important. It is. But it's the culture that NCH has developed over these past several years about which we are most proud. "*This is My Hospital*" is more than a slogan. Most of us who work here demonstrate that phrase every day in the actions we take on behalf of those we serve. At the base of this culture is a belief that when you help others and do the right thing often enough, you get the right results.

Selflessness, not self-centeredness, is the attitude which ultimately brings successful outcomes to both care receiver and caregiver. With such selflessness comes an attitude of transparency in what we do and trust in working together to accomplish it. This is the kind of culture that has begun to permeate NCH.

- **Second, I've observed that most of our 3,750 colleagues and 640 medical professionals at NCH believe that what they do is a truly "*noble*" vocation.**

The *noble professions* are those which place the needs and desires of their clients ahead of their own. Healthcare, education, and the ministry are all examples of noble professions where the needs of the patient, student, or supplicant are paramount. People who just have "jobs," which end when the workday is over, can improve their lives by evolving into a career. Career people are proud of what they do and have a purpose and identity. Evolving from a career to a vocation is the highest goal. The word "vocation," comes from the Latin *vocare* or voice. The vocation of a doctor or nurse might be "*healer*." The vocation of a dietician might be "*nourisher*." The vocation of an environmental service professional might be "*infection preventer*," and so on. Everyone in healthcare has his or her own vocation. You just have to want to embrace it. And I believe that the vast majority of us at NCH do just that.

- **Third, I'm convinced that the vocation of a healthcare system CEO should be to address the health of the population he or she serves.**

That population, in my case, includes our community, individual patients, families, and all of our colleagues. But no one of us can do this alone. We are a collaborative community, we are interdependent, and ours is truly a "*team*" in the best sense of the word. As I look forward and consider our goal of attaining national prominence, I'm encouraged that neither our community, our institution, the NCH Board, our colleagues, leadership team, nor the CEO will be satisfied with resting on past laurels. Rather, as our external environment becomes even more challenging, I'm confident we will be even more committed to moving more profoundly into the future with executable plans. We are all in this together, and I, for one, couldn't be more pleased with the people who serve our noble cause.

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.