

October 20, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Seven of us have returned from Kansas City, more eager than ever to face the challenges ahead.

Last week CNO **Michele Thoman**, Microsystem Critical Care Director **Jon Kling**, Director of Nurse Informatics **Gerald McGinnis**, Director of Utilization **Mark Milner**, IT Executive Director **Rick Plisko**, Senior Director IT Works **David Vigil**, and I joined 5,000 global healthcare information technology professionals at the annual meeting of our partner, Cerner, the largest, most successful, financially-secure source of healthcare information technology in the world. Three speeches were particularly memorable:

- Dr. Denis Cortese, Emeritus President and CEO of the Mayo Clinic, captured the spirit of the gathering, “*Leading the Possible*,” which focused on what successful healthcare organizations like NCH have accomplished with Cerner. For almost a decade, Dr. Cortese has shared three questions with audiences and always gets the same response. First, who wants to be admitted to a hospital tomorrow even if it is the best hospital in the country? Second, who would like to be sick tomorrow? Third, who wants to be a patient? The answer to all three, of course, is “*no one*.” We all want to avoid being a patient, yet we don’t all practice behaviors to help keep us well. Organizations like ours need to migrate from a sickness system, with huge repair shops, to a prevention program with productive Wellness Centers, like our two wonderful facilities in Naples (<http://www.nchmd.org/wellness>). We need to be a learning organization that is constantly more efficient and rewarded for outcomes—meaning how well a patient does, not how much care a patient needs.
- Dr. Wendy Sue Swanson, a pediatrician noted for her educational blogs (<http://seattlemamadoc.seattlechildrens.org/>), discussed how to escape the confinement of a medical office by using technology to communicate with all those for whom we provide care. With 800 million people worldwide on Facebook, 65% of Internet users actively social networking, and 83% of Americans owning a hand held device—communicating through technology is a new healthcare imperative. Communicating electronically is becoming a trusted new model between patients and physicians. Next, insurance company payers need to recognize and reward these interactions that will cost everyone less. While the human touch will always trump technological advance, we should all work to optimize our use of technology to facilitate the continuity of care and comfort we deliver.
- The event concluded with an overview by Neal Patterson, Cerner Founding Partner and CEO. His vision and innovation created the culture of IT success in which everyone in our community is now benefiting. Cerner, he said, is “*genetically reengineering*” itself to become one digital institution with the ability to improve quality, safety and outcomes while driving down costs. Having accomplished the “heavy lifting,” institutions such as NCH can now benefit from the artificial intelligence and evidence-based medicine that has been perfected to secure better outcomes. With improved technology, we can not only better serve our patients but also better understand the dynamics of what we do. Digital technology is the backbone for seismic change in the healthcare ecosystem.

My overall takeaway from the Cerner meeting was that by embracing digital, we can provide better quality outcomes in a safer environment and with more capacity to care, even while bending the cost curve downward (as we demonstrated with our own health insurance). That’s a noble goal for our hospital and our community.

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).