

# Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



December 29, 2011

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

For this final *Straight Talk* of 2011, it's time to check the four "New Year's resolutions" I posed in the [first \*Straight Talk\* of the year](#). Let's see how we did.

## **Resolution #1: Creating a memorable patient experience.**

Patient Experience Coordinator **Paul Clarke** proudly reports that the patient satisfaction numbers this year were outstanding. We trended up, in fact, in the five primary [patient experience surveys](#) (1) [Rate the Hospital](#) (2) [Hospital Inpatient Overall](#), (3) [Emergency Dept Overall](#), (4) [Inpatient Rehabilitation Overall](#), and (5) [Outpatient Services Overall](#). Pacing our improvement has been the Emergency Room, where patient satisfaction has increased dramatically over the past three years, from 81.9 to 86.7%. This no doubt stems from our shorter "door to doctor time," which measures how quickly a patient sees a physician. In the peak winter months, we average about 35 minutes; during the summer nadir, this drops to 20 minutes. While we still have work to do in further improving the patient experience, our progress this year was heartening.

## **Resolution #2: Improving community health.**

For the second year in a row, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recognized Collier as the healthiest of the 67 counties in Florida. We also hold the record of the longest life expectancy for a woman and second longest for a man. This year, we offered many more initiatives to lower morbidity (complications) and mortality and, as proof of our progress, had the most posters (18) at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) conference this year. These posters objectively demonstrate our best practices which are shared with the other almost 6,000 leaders from around the world. NCH was also the catalyst for the group of more than 30 agencies that became the Safe and Healthy Children's Coalition of Collier County, focused on preventing the two most common causes of death in pre-school children—drowning and co-sleeping. We've led the community in terms of smoking cessation by not hiring smokers. Finally, along with Drug Free Collier and Hazelden, NCH continues to help stamp out "pill mills" in our community.

## **Resolution #3: Achieve a higher value for our patients.**

*Quality healthcare*, of course, must be the hallmark of NCH. Here, too, our objective measures of quality have improved year-over-year. Specific examples include our cardiac surgeons being recognized by the Society for Thoracic Surgery as being a part of a hospital which is among the top 10% of all hospitals in the nation. Thanks largely to the teamwork of our superior nurses and support staff, we also scored well in such areas as prevention of central line infections, pressure sores, falls; and improved on a host of other key metrics. Even as we lowered our costs—the other side of the value proposition—we are concerned about decreased reimbursement going forward. This is a topic for another day. But most important, NCH's *service quality*—and therefore value to our patients—continues to improve.

## **Resolution #4: Build our own self image.**

New research suggests that our rallying cry, "*This is My Hospital*," is recognized by three-quarters of folks randomly surveyed in our area. *Consumer's Choice* found NCH's overall quality, physicians, nurses, and image/reputation twice as positive as anyone else in the area. Best of all, two IHI attendees, 3N Nurse Manager **Kristin Miller** and 2N Nurse Manager **Marcia Swasey** agreed that NCH—once "a small community hospital"—is now admired by healthcare experts around the country. Said Marcia, "*I realize how far we've come.*"

All in all, 2011 was quite a successful year for NCH, not only in delivering on our resolutions but most important, in providing our community with superior healthcare. You are all extraordinarily talented people and have much to be proud of. And I wish you the happiest of New Years.

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* and ask anyone to email me at [allen.weiss@nchmd.org](mailto:allen.weiss@nchmd.org) to be added.