

# Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



March 15, 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

***“Be Aware for Safe Care.”***

That’s the theme we have shared with colleagues throughout the system, as NCH strives to be a *“no guilt culture,”* where patient safety is a daily way of life for every one of us. To help us achieve that goal, NCH is a proud partner of the National Patient Safety Foundation. Our Patient Safety Awareness Task Force, led by Associate Chief Nursing Officer **Laurie Zone-Smith**, PhD, RN, NE-BC and Risk Manager **Barb Bixby**, RN was excited to participate very recently in Patient Safety Awareness Week.

Among last week’s activities, we sponsored our very own Starbucks-like *“Safe Care Café,”* where we reviewed our ongoing hand washing initiative with an educational glow germ demonstration. The display revealed effectiveness in hand washing through applying a non-toxic invisible material to hands to simulate contact with germs, followed by normal hand washing, to see how much of the invisible material is left when hands are placed under a special glow light. I’m pleased that more than 95% of us have completed a hospital-wide hand washing initiative.

<http://www.glogerm.com/using.html>)

Attaining a *“no guilt culture”* means knowing whenever and wherever we can improve. Nearly half of national healthcare workers feel their mistakes and unfortunate events are held against them, according to a recent *American Medical News* report. In our own confidential patient survey last year, 97% of the 544 respondents rated NCH *“very good”* or *“excellent.”* With *“5”* representing a possible perfect score for patient safety, we recorded a 3.96. We are repeating this confidential inquiry this year and are hopeful for improvement. I will let you know the results.

Meanwhile, we are actively focusing on areas for self-improvement in patient safety. Our profession has been criticized in the past for not being proactive, transparent or self-correcting. We are doing much to counteract that impression. For example, the Florida Hospital Association, where I am privileged to participate on the Quality Committee, reported that more than 25% of Florida’s 400 hospitals have participated in a collaborative effort to decrease readmissions. That resulted in 11% fewer readmissions statewide, saving \$25 million. Additionally, 67 Florida hospitals are participating in the nation’s largest surgical quality effort to decrease surgical site infections, prevent urinary tract infections post-op, and improve both colectomy (bowel resection) outcomes and surgical outcomes in the elderly (<http://www.fha.org/patientsafety/safteytoolkit.html>). Another state program, of which NCH was an initial member, targets the prevention of blood stream infections. Proudly, NCH has not had a central line infection for many months in the following units—North Naples ICU for 10 months, Progressive Care and Surgical ICU 15 months, Downtown ICU 22 months and Cardiovascular Unit 25 months, a significant achievement.

All in all, NCH continues to devote considerable resources to improving healthcare for ourselves, our community and our country by sharing best practices in all quality areas. One of our most important objectives is to make NCH safer for our patients. Achieving this mandate is not only lifesaving for patients, but also helps all of us feel better about what we do every day, and burnishes our reputation as a nationally-ranked healthcare provider. All of this underscores the recognition of Southwest Florida as a medical tourist attraction, helping our economy recover. So being *“aware for safe care”* helps us all.

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.