

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most

March 22, 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Two of the most important and influential groups in the NCH family are our volunteers and our nurses. And this week, we recognize both.

- It's "*Hats Off to Volunteers*" this week, honoring those who help create the caring culture that is NCH.

Every day, in so many ways, our NCH Volunteers contribute to the well-being of a county that has been recognized twice now as the healthiest of all 67 counties in Florida. One indisputable ingredient that makes Collier the healthiest county is our legion of dedicated volunteers helping those in need.

Volunteers are often the first and last impression of NCH that a patient or family receives—whether at the front door, in the golf cart offering a ride from the parking lot, escorting a family through a hospital campus, or assisting at the time of discharge. From our *White Elephant* to our mailroom, volunteers contribute substantially and tangibly to every phase of hospital operations. Stated simply, volunteers are invaluable in reinforcing the reputation of NCH as a high-touch *and* high-tech institution.

All of us at NCH so much appreciate the contribution of every NCH Volunteer, and we hope that each derives equivalent satisfaction in knowing that they are performing such a valuable community service.

- Nursing is also on the move. Last week, our Board of Trustees received an update on Nursing Shared Governance, presented by **Laurie Zone-Smith**, PhD, RN, NE-BC, to our Board Human Resources Committee, chaired by **Wayne Mullican** and organized by Interim Chief Human Resources Officer **Renee Thigpen**.

Shared governance is an opportunity for growth and development while still maintaining a clinical practice. Leadership from the bedside supports authority, responsibility, accountability and all the processes that support excellent patient care. These opportunities enhance job satisfaction, quality care, and fiscal viability—creating a win-win situation for all nurses, patients and the rest of us in the NCH family.

Our career ladder program, a foundation of shared governance, includes five stages. The program was created by nurses and is based on continuing education, expertise, and professional development. It now has 214 of 943, or 23% of eligible nurses engaged. Those in the upper three tiers are eligible for bonuses ranging from 2% to 4%. Investing in nursing education is not only the best single change-agent for nurses, but also for patients and our community. Our annual, all-encompassing nurse satisfaction survey has shown improvement in nine of 10 parameters and has helped focus our efforts on areas needing improvement. The evolution of our nurses is clearly a journey moving in the right direction.

Our 1,200 volunteers served a total of 185,000 hours last year. These volunteers and 1,139 total nurses, along with our 608 physicians and 3,000 other caregivers, serve our community with distinction. When we proclaim, "*This Is My Hospital*," we are talking about the contributions of *all* the members of this committed team, working together as caregivers.

The NCH Board of Trustees, our colleagues and I sincerely thank you for all you do for our organization. You have made such a wonderful difference to so many people, and we are all eternally grateful.

Respectfully,



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 to be added.