

April 19, 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Change is the only constant in healthcare, a point driven home in a presentation by healthcare strategist and futurist Nate Kaufman this past Saturday at a Telford Auditorium session full of Board members, medical staff and NCH colleagues.

“*Preparing for the Inevitable Perilous Journey from Entitlement to Accountability*” was the title of the talk by this nationally recognized expert who claims an 80% success rate in predicting outcomes of business endeavors over his 35-year career. You can see more on Mr. Kaufman’s thoughts and themes at www.nchmd.org/natekaufman.

Some of the themes we heard:

- The current economic glide path for the healthcare delivery system is not sustainable. In other words, no one is immune from arithmetic.
- The Accountable Care Act is fundamentally flawed; however, either this Act or its sequel is inevitable. The current economic stress outweighs the pending Supreme Court decision.
- Successful innovation requires everyone’s commitment to reducing hospital utilization, a culture of shared sacrifice, the ability to measure and respond to quality/cost (the value equation) in real time, the skill to direct the patient to the right place at the right time, selective inclusion of specialists, experienced and robust infrastructure, a digitally connected network, an electronic medical record with point-of-care protocols, and strong physician leadership.

Strong physician leadership is essential to thrive in the future, and in that light, the annual Medical Staff meeting last night celebrated Dr. **Paul Dernbach**, who finished his two-year term as President emphasizing quality, and Dr. **Jeff Heitmann**, who assumed the Presidency. Dr. **Paul Jones** is President-elect and Dr. **Ken Plunkitt** is Secretary/Treasurer. These officers lead 11 department chairmen and a medical staff of over 600 individuals dedicated to helping patients.

A second highlight of the annual meeting was the recognition of the “COMPASS” award nominees: **Matthew Baker**, MD (Neurology), **H. Kurtis Biggs**, DO (Orthopaedic Surgery), **Mark Brown**, MD (Infectious Disease), **Paul D. Dernbach**, MD (Neurosurgery), **Ronald Garry**, MD (Geriatric Medicine), **Vijay Konda**, MD (Hospitalist Medicine), **David Lamon**, MD (General Surgery), **Holly Miller**, MD (OB GYN), **Manuel Ortega-Elias**, MD (Neonatology), **Carlos Quintero**, MD (Hospitalist Medicine), **James Scanlon**, MD (Vascular Surgery), and **C. Todd Vedder**, MD (Pediatrics).

These outstanding physicians were recognized by nurses with whom they work. The award recognizes what is great about physicians and nurses *working together* to create and sustain a wonderful environment of care for patients, families and each other. The letters in the name spell out how all of us should conduct ourselves in healthcare:

- “C” is for caring, compassion and collaboration. “O” is for open, objective and observant. “M” is for meticulous, mentor and model. “P” is for professional, pleasant and positive. “A” is for approachable, appreciative and no attitude. “S” is for superior skills, standards and sociable. “S” is for special.

Two COMPASS award physician nominees were overwhelmingly supported: Drs. H. Kurtis Biggs and Vijay K. Konda. The consistently excellent attitude and care for patients and staff shown by these physicians are an example for all.

We live and practice in a rapidly changing dynamic environment, as futurist Nate Kaufman emphasized. Our great physician leaders are partners and collaborators who help us create a better future for all.

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.