

May 17, 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We just celebrated National Nurses Week. Led by **Chief Nursing Officer Michele Thoman**, our nurses comprise an extremely hardworking group, and are deserving of this recognition. As Michele notes, *“So much has changed positively in the last three years—validation for all the work we’ve done to turn the department to a high-performing team.”*

Here are three recent examples, from letters I’ve received, of caring nurses who are saving lives every day.

- **Jignesh Patel**, MD, FAAP, wrote about a life-saving experience at the NICU and newborn nursery, thanks to nurse **Lindsey Koepke**. Dr. Patel wrote that *“Nurse Lindsey’s vigilant observation and clinical skills picked up very subtle but important signals of a potential danger to one newborn child. She ultimately decided to be the patient advocate and called me (neonatologist) at almost 1 a.m. and asked me to come and examine this apparently well-looking newborn baby. I agreed with her findings and transferred the baby into the NICU. In a few hours of work-up, we diagnosed a potentially fatal tumor (teratoma) in the baby’s pelvis. The baby was promptly stabilized and transported to The Miami Children’s Hospital for surgical care. If Nurse Lindsey hadn’t shown her qualities (critical thinking), then this baby would have been dead. Especially impressive was her ability to pick up symptoms and signs of an extremely rare and fatal condition. I appeal that Nurse Lindsey’s work should be set as an example to other nurses of excellence in quality of care and being an advocate for this little newborn.”* Thank you Dr. Patel, and thank you Lindsey Koepke for making us all proud.
- Operating Room **RN Stefani Cohen** wrote about teamwork in the OR in an urgent case involving an 11-year-old girl. *“Administrative Coordinator **RN Melody Bacon** and **Dr. Joe Talarico** came to the OR to inform us that the girl had a fractured spleen and was too unstable to be airlifted. Melody called in the Certified Registered Nurse anesthesia students, while I spoke to **Dr. Karl Horsten**. **Yves Desruisseaux** picked the case and set it up. Dr. Horsten arrived quickly, and nurse **Sharon Frank** gave us a concise and thorough report. Once the patient was asleep, Dr. Talarico inserted the patient’s Foley catheter, while I counted with Yves, called for more blood and prepped the patient. **Dr. Deborah Lopez** came into the OR to observe and found a way to help out with the sponge count. The patient was transferred to Peds ICU, accompanied by Dr. Horsten, his two anesthesia students **Julie Hannum** and **Todd Hartley** and **Kris Andreassen** from PACU. The patient had a very good outcome. A pleasure to work with this team.”*
- **Joyce Campbell**, who joined NCH as a NICU nurse in February, recounted a miraculous story about filling in at the Normal Newborn Nursery and working with Dr. Patel to help save a newborn with signs of cyanosis (bluish-purple skin color due to low oxygen in the blood). Nurse Campbell’s quick diagnosis helped expedite a rapid transfer of the stabilized child to Miami Children’s Hospital within nine hours of birth.

These three stories embrace the commitment and competence of NCH nurses. Fittingly, some of our best were recognized in a beautiful affair at the Naples Beach Club Hotel: *Nurse of the Year-Downtown* **Marie Mejia** (6N), *North Naples* **Jean Snyder** (OPIS); *Thelma Hodges Nurse Mentor-Downtown* **Elita McRae** (6N), *North Naples* **Deborah D’Orazio** (3rd Floor); *Rising Star-Downtown* **Jennifer Hiatt** (6S), *North Naples* **Amanda Reyes** (4E); *Support Super Stars-Downtown* **Clinical Tech Nazly Gallego** (GVS), *North Naples* **Vanie Cineus** (OPIS); *Unit Secretary-Downtown* **Alena Sager** (ICU) and *North Naples* **Linda Calderone** (NICU). Congratulations to all these winners, and thank you to all our wonderful nurses, who help make NCH the high quality medical center it has become.

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.