

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most

July 19, 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Congratulations, one and all. We've done it again!

Once again in 2012, *U. S. News & World Report* has recognized the NCH Healthcare System as among the Best Hospitals in the nation and in Southern Florida. NCH is the only hospital in southwest Florida to have achieved this distinction *twice*.

This is the 23rd year the magazine has published its national Honor Roll—720 top hospitals across the nation, ranked in 16 specialties and in selected metropolitan and regional areas. This year, NCH was ranked 22nd of all hospitals in Florida, with particular high performance in gastroenterology and orthopedics. Complete rankings and methodology of this process are available at <http://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals>.

According to Avery Comarow, Health Rankings Editor at *U.S. News*, these hospital rankings are a GPS-like aid to help steer patients to hospitals with strong skills in the procedures and medical conditions that present the biggest challenges. *"All of these hospitals are the kinds of medical centers that should be on your list when you need the best care. They are where other hospitals send the toughest cases,"* Comarow stated.

U.S. News is but the latest external, independent observer to recognize NCH. We have been fortunate over the past few years to be recognized for our quality, safety, financial stability, and overall excellence by a number of respected authorities, including:

- The Society of Thoracic Surgeons ranked our open heart surgery program among the top 10% in the country.
- HealthGrades has ranked NCH among the best in Florida in many fields for years.
- Our total joint replacement volume for Medicare patients is almost always among the top 10 in the nation and was second twice only to the renowned Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City, a specialty orthopedic and rheumatology hospital, where I had the good fortune to train.
- Moody's has reaffirmed our A2 stable bond rating. (Until last year, we never even had a bond rating.)
- We have also received a "Most Wired" award from *Hospitals & Health Networks* magazine for excellence in healthcare information technology.

All these awards are gratifying and certainly make us proud. But most important is our work in placing the patient first. That's the *real key* to NCH. We are a team of almost 4,000 colleagues, more than 600 physicians, and 1,200 volunteers who care for patients—one at a time. Each of our patients is our most important responsibility.

To bolster our great team, we have been joined by new Chief Information Officer **Helen Thompson**, who recently retired from the United States Navy Reserve. Some of Helen's notable assignments included the U.S. Military Hospital Kuwait, CIO/Communications Officer, and Navy Reserve Deputy Chief Information Officer responsible for 270 facilities. She also led Baldrige Award-winning Heartland Health's information technologies initiative for nine years. Helen will lead our effort with Cerner to integrate our community's medical records with a health information exchange (HIE). We welcome Helen to the leadership team.

We have been on a journey these past 12 years, evolving from a sole community hospital to a medical destination where one of every eight patients arriving at NCH seeking care comes from outside our five-county area. We weather our industry's, our region's and our nation's challenges with a focus on execution, diligence and teamwork that has forged our reputation for excellence.

Every day brings new challenge and greater success. It is my privilege to be associated with such an outstanding institution and such extraordinary, dedicated people. Thanks to you all for our continuing achievements.

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.