

November 29, 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen of NCH, I am pleased to announce that we have another new partner.

**Florida Blue**—the new incarnation of Blue Cross and Blue Shield, a leader in Florida since 1944—has entered into an exciting new arrangement with the NCH Healthcare System and the NCH Healthcare Group, comprised of 64 physicians and 25 nurse practitioners/physician assistants, including the Naples Heart Institute. It's the first step towards a revolutionary accountable care organization.

Our goal in this new collaboration is simple—to improve patient outcomes by providing the right care at the right time, while avoiding unnecessary over-utilization of resources. Together we are building a new delivery care model that shifts towards value-based reimbursement, while improving the overall quality of care for Florida Blue members who are cared for by the NCH Healthcare Group.

Indeed, a recent survey of primary-care physicians, published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, found that 42% of respondents believe patients in their own practices are getting “too much care.” Only 6% think their patients are getting “too little care.”

According to the Institute of Medicine, “*This epidemic of overtreatment—too many scans, too many blood tests, too many procedures—is costing our nation’s healthcare system at least \$210 billion a year and taking a human toll in pain, emotional suffering, severe complications, and even death.*” America’s healthcare spending alone is equivalent to the fifth largest economy in the world. Clearly, we can’t succeed as a nation if healthcare costs continue to outpace our resources. So what can we do?

As Pat Geraghty, Chairman and CEO of Florida Blue has stated, “*In the age of reform, health care organizations must create new models of care that deliver the highest quality of care while reducing the cost burden for all stakeholders.*”

The NCH-Florida Blue partnership is an exciting first step to becoming an accountable care program—which promotes quality, care coordination, and total care management. Our overall goal is to improve individual care management and decrease costs while improving quality. Our patients, families, and community will all benefit by using evidence-based medicine while avoiding *unnecessary* emergency room visits, hospital admissions, tests, and procedures.

“*First, do no harm,*” is the mantra every physician embraces at graduation from medical school; it’s the motivation for all of us in this noble profession of healthcare. Our new collaboration responds to this worthwhile cause, augmenting Southwest Florida’s allure as a healthy community and a medical destination.

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](mailto:allen.weiss@nchmd.org) to be added.