

December 20, 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The essential mission of NCH and its 4,000 caregivers is to help our neighbors live a longer, happier, and healthier life. In plain English, our mantra boils down to two simple words, “*Be nice.*”

And in this holiday season, with recent events reminding us how precious and fleeting life is, it becomes more important than ever for each of us to “be nice.”

We all know the difference it makes in our own lives when someone takes the time to show us compassion. Our patients regularly report in the “Patient Comments” from our surveys that they sincerely appreciate the wonderful care and compassion they so often experience. The inescapable point is that folks really notice when we’re being “nice,” and this attitude impacts the way they rate their experiences at our facilities.

NCH Patient Experience Expert **Paul Clarke** shared the following Facebook interaction with a patient whose experience in the Emergency Room started poorly, but subsequently turned into a very positive one.

*“I just wanted to send a big 'thank you' for responding so quickly and for the compassion and attentiveness provided by Paul Clarke. Unfortunately, I had to return to your ER on Tuesday and the experience was completely different. Everyone from the initial reception attendant, to the triage nurse, to my assigned RN and especially the (different) doctor were all polite, attentive and clear about my conditions. The experience was incredible in general, and especially in comparison to my previous experience received last week. And, kudos to your web group for nearly immediate response. I can honestly say that the quick response to my complaint and the amazing care I received this week vs. last week have changed my mind about your facility and staff. Thank you again and happy holidays.”*

As this experience shows, we have made tremendous progress on our journey to delivering compassionate care, but we aren’t there yet. We have room to improve to fulfill our vision of becoming a world-class provider of excellence in healthcare. Most of us want to be nice, but the perceptions of us by others may not match our self-perceptions. In fact, in terms of measurement, if we were rated one point higher by an additional 20 patients per month, we would exceed our 2013 goal of 70% on “inpatient satisfaction.” So by simply focusing on “*being nice,*” we can make a big difference.

It sounds simple. But we shouldn’t underestimate the importance of “being nice” as one of the most significant differentiators to ensure our ability to survive and thrive amidst the massive changes that are coming in healthcare.

A key measurement for reimbursement will be patient experience, including how satisfied they are with the service they say they received at a hospital. Our best course is to continue to deliver on the “service excellence” that has earned us considerable accolades in recent years, and the seal of quality inherent in our Mayo affiliation.

So my hope this holiday season is that all of us become fully engaged with the NCH Vision, Mission and Values; that we make them our own. Then, together, we can help ensure our future by doing worthwhile work and helping each other live longer, happier and healthier lives. It starts with “*being nice.*”

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.