

March 21, 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

COO **Phil Dutcher** and I got a glimpse into the future of healthcare last week, and it was a real eye-opener in terms of the challenges all of us will confront.

The venue was the Voluntary Hospital Association's Upper Midwest meeting. Among the speakers were Steven Lefar, CEO of Sg2, a healthcare think tank; and Dee Donatelli of Hayes, Inc., an internationally recognized health technology assessor. Both shared best practices to improve the value equation (meaning, Value = Quality/Cost). Here are some key takeaways about how to act with confidence in an age of uncertainty, and how to create a strategy of abundance in an age of scarcity.

- The future health care system starts at home, migrates to electronic visits, Wellness and Fitness Centers, retail pharmacy, physician's office, diagnostic center, urgent care center, and perhaps an ambulatory procedure center. If all goes well, a hospital stay is avoided. We will try to keep a patient out of the hospital at all costs. The future hospital will be a combination emergency room, operating room and intensive-care unit, big enough to support a round-the-clock full lab, pharmacy, blood bank, radiology, and all other highly technical departments. After hospitalization or even when skipping a hospitalization, a patient may be in rehab, a skilled nursing facility, outpatient rehab and ultimately back home.

As a result of this cycle, inpatient admissions are expected to decline by 8% and increase outpatient care by 22%. Certain specialties will see the shift to outpatient more than others—with cardiology, endocrinology, nephrology, and pulmonary leading the way.

- Electronic visits will increase as we employ *Face Time* and *Skype* with our physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. The use of such information technology will disrupt the rise of today's proliferating urgent care/retail clinics.
- Successful systems will migrate from the inpatient repair shop mentality to outpatient wellness and prevention.
- Avoiding preventable admissions, appropriateness of care, along with quality and cost will be measurable metrics defining success and the quality of life for a community.
- The mark of successful organizations will be to evolve from a patient-encounter to an integrated system focused on prevention and on improving the health of the population. Integration with social service agencies, schools, employers, payers, and the government will also be the rule in successful communities.

Evidence-based medicine is creating best practice guidelines for each patient's needs. The goal: Translating scientific data into information that can be integrated easily into technology planning and management.

Constantly learning, identifying and tracking new and emerging best practices, eliminating ineffective treatments and harmful diagnostic tests, are important as NCH continues the journey to provide the best care for everyone.

Ours promises to be a "wild ride." But it's a journey we're prepared for and look forward to, as we continue to serve our community with a level of modern healthcare that is second to none.

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D., President and CEO

P.S. DO YOU HAVE A COLLEAGUE OR FRIEND WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THESE UPDATES?

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