

August 29, 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we celebrate Labor Day weekend, let's recall the timeless advice of the Chinese philosopher Confucius, who advised, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

As caregivers, each of us has chosen the most noble of professions: Bringing healthy, sustaining, sometimes life-saving outcomes to those we serve.

So, too, as an organization, over a decade we have focused on building a culture of success to aid those we serve—a virtuous cycle of improved performance. This continuous journey has been marked by fits and starts as the healthcare climate becomes more complex and the global environment more competitive.

The immediate outlook for healthcare suggests accelerated pressure, as the major payer, our government, continues to be challenged financially. Indeed, with some predicting that the Medicare system will be insolvent in 13 years, the pressures on our industry and on all of us will not subside soon.

How we react to continuing challenge will tell the tale on how we succeed in the decade ahead. Our attitude as individuals and as an organization is more important to our success than any other factor. Keeping a positive attitude in the midst of constant change isn't an easy task. Being overwhelmed by fatigue, frustration, and fear can overwhelm all of the altruism, vitality, inspiration, meaning and creativity that we bring to even this most noble of professions.

One need only look at the numbers. Studies suggest that 40% of nurses feel burned out, job dissatisfaction among nurses is five times higher than other workers, and 20% of nurses plan to leave their jobs within one year. Meanwhile, 84% of physicians believe the medical profession is in decline, 77% are pessimistic, and 58% wouldn't recommend medicine to their children. (Not in my case!) More than one-third of physicians say they wouldn't choose medicine if they had their careers to do over.

That, in a nutshell, is the challenge we face: To retain our idealism and our spirit in the midst of change and doubt.

Whether you are a critical care physician literally saving a life, or a groundskeeper beautifying our parking garage, our primary task remains putting the interests of our patients ahead of our own. That means answering the question the Mayo brothers asked more than 150 years ago, "What is best for the patient?"

It all comes back to the individual and what he or she goes to work to do. There's a great quote from Harvard Business School Professor Christopher Bartlett, "People don't come to work to be number one or two or to get 20% return on assets. They come to work to get **meaning** from their lives." At NCH we believe this meaning to be helping everyone live a longer, happier, and healthier life.

As caregivers, we can feel fulfillment knowing that our lives have "meaning." May I wish you and your family the most happy and peaceful of Labor Day weekends.

Respectfully,



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

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