

April 10, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This week, NCH Healthcare System realized a decades-old dream.

For more than 10 years, we have looked for a way to centralize cancer care and treatment so that the one in three people in our community who contract this stressful disease can be provided comprehensive care in a single full-service location. This week, NCH and 21st Century Oncology formally joined the team of Florida Cancer Specialists and the Naples Medical Center to be physically located on or near the downtown campus.

What this means to the residents of Collier County is that for the first time, cancer patients can now receive comprehensive and coordinated cancer care—diagnosis, diagnostic radiology, medical treatment, radiation therapy treatment and, if needed, in-patient care—all on one campus. NCH has achieved great success and distinction with similar coordinated approaches in such areas as cardiac care, where coordinated cross-functional teams stop heart attacks (Save-A-Heart) and do off-pump open heart surgery; and hip-and-knee replacement surgery, where orthopedists coordinate pre- and postoperative care and physical therapy and rehabilitation with in-patient and out-patient caregivers.

Our new cancer care clinical partnership will be staffed by thirteen medical oncologists, combined with five radiation oncologists and their support staff. All existing staff-level personnel will continue in their present functions as will Drs. Freidman and Freeman, so current patients will experience no change in their care. We will also continue our policy of caring for everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

While plans for more formal collaboration are still progressing, one thing is certain: This new centralized approach to cancer care will be of tremendous benefit to our community.

This clinical partnership continues a steady history of progress at NCH in fighting cancer. One significant reason for this progress is the Lutgert family, which has had such a profound impact in donating the twin Lutgert Cancer Centers on the downtown campus. All of us owe the Lutgerts great gratitude for their selfless and generous actions in behalf of serving the healthcare needs of our community.

Most recently in terms of cancer care, NCH Nurse Educator Jennifer Stanley was recognized by the Susan G. Koman Foundation for receiving a grant to purchase garments for women who have just undergone breast surgery to have a more comfortable recovery. These garments are worn post-operatively and hold the drain in place while providing proper support. Such initiatives will help expedite recoveries. Jennifer is a wonderful example of an innovative nurse whose ingenuity and initiative will make a real difference in helping victims of breast cancer for years to come. She, too, deserves our congratulations and thanks.

All of these efforts to improve our response and treatment to the insidious disease of cancer are examples of how, working together, we can improve exponentially the lives of all those we serve.

Respectfully,



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