

May 8, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

In the wake of our difficult announcement last Thursday that we would have to eliminate some positions at NCH, this hasn't been the easiest week for many of us. Understandably, many are anxious about what lies ahead, particularly in terms of job security.

While I can't promise today that no further action will be necessary, I can assure you that we are working hard, on both the revenue and expense sides, to navigate through this downturn without having to take additional staff actions. Further, I am hopeful that as all of us focus on our primary mission, "to promote, maintain and restore" health for our patients, we will all feel more confident that we can control our own destiny. Work ethic and initiative will make a real difference.

In that spirit, this week we celebrated some of our most outstanding caregivers in conjunction with both Nurses Week and Hospital Week. More than 100 nurses and others were recognized for high achievement, ranging from mentoring to obtaining advanced degrees to being awarded nurse of the year honors by their colleagues.

One highlight was the awarding of the first Thelma Hodges Nurse Mentors of the Year to **Michelle Bennette** (4S) and **Deon Thomas** (6S). Both richly deserve this honor that was created by Mrs. Hodges, the first Nurse Director of the OR, who arrived in Naples more than 50 years ago as a new nurse. Mrs. Hodges' career has evolved from the OR to President of Visiting Nurse Association in Collier County to lately being a diligent volunteer at the White Elephant. Through it all, she has done many wonderful deeds for NCH. Our hospital has no better friend.

Other award recipients included:

- **Sue Moran**, neonatal ICU nurse, was awarded nurse of the year for the care and compassion she gives to the very small and ill newborns and their parents who are at a very stressful time in the life of the family. She also was noted to be a competent and patient mentor.
- Nurse Support Superstar went to 20+ year NCH employee **Irma Garcia**, who was praised for her ability to multitask, being adaptable and for not standing on ceremony when it comes to helping colleagues.
- **Kara Prestigiacomo**, an RN for less than a year, was awarded Rising Star honors for already being "adored" by her pediatric patients, families, and colleagues.
- Direct Caregiver **Robert Yoshida** was cited for the accolades he constantly receives in the Press Ganey surveys from his orthopedic patients.
- Indirect Caregiver winner **Joan McInerney** was honored for helping thousands with pressure sore prevention, knowledge of which she recently shared in a published paper.
- Finally, Administrative Nurse **Cindi Lukacs**, who directs the NCH Healthcare System - Marco Island Campus and works in Occupational Health, was recognized for her long and distinguished career at NCH.

These outstanding performers are just a few of the caregivers that have helped establish NCH's national reputation for high quality and caring service. "Together we make a difference" has real meaning and is the expression on the gift bags we have shared this week. I'm confident that continuing to perform to such high standards will help us succeed in the current downturn and create the longer-term stability we all desire.

Respectfully,



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