

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most

May 29, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

There's a good reason we need to keep investing in technology: It helps us do our jobs better and, ultimately, saves lives.

Chief Information Officer Susan Wolff shared a story about how our esteemed ER physician and Board member Dr. Alberto de la Rivaherrera used the latest technology to reassure an anxious mother that her child would be all right. Using a mobile computer tablet and our new PACS (Picture Archiving and Communications System) at the patient's bedside, Dr. Rivaherrera showed the mom where the marble her child had swallowed was passing through the intestines. Through PACS, we can send an image anywhere on the planet with an internet connection—to office or home, day or night, 24/7.

Technology also helped us spread the word about stroke prevention. After NCH's rehab department was featured in a WINK-TV news story about early diagnosis, prompt treatment and improved prognosis, the five-minute video was moved to the Web at www.WINKNews.com (look for "Surviving a Stroke"). There you can see the heart-warming story of an NCH patient with a great attitude. Viewing this video may help someone prevent a stroke.

Such are the contributions to modern healthcare of cutting-edge technology.

I also want to share with you three important topics discussed at this week's Department Head Meeting: 1) revenue cycle redesign, 2) Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) and 3) hourly rounding.

- **Revenue Cycle Redesign (RCD)** deals with our need—and that of most of the hospitals in the nation—to be paid for the services we provide by patients and insurance companies who can afford to pay us. RCD consolidates the patient registration process, so that we can collect both out-of-pocket patient responsibilities and accurate insurance information, up-front. In order to better assist our patients we have created the position of "patient representative" to utilize the skills of our experienced admitting, ER registration, and business office team members.
- **HCAHPS** is Medicare's new measurement system for patient satisfaction. HCAHPS randomly surveys discharged patients on such issues as doctor and nurse communications, responsiveness of hospital staff, pain control, medication, discharge education and cleanliness and quietness of the hospital. Fewer than 5% of patients are sampled and the data are nine months old when published. But they do represent a way of comparing ourselves to peer hospital systems and national averages.
- **Hourly rounding** will be one way we'll respond to the HCAHPS challenge. By enlisting nurses and other care givers to visit each patient more frequently, other hospitals have seen significant decreases in falls, call bell use and pressure sores, as well as substantial increases in patient satisfaction. One hospital even reported a 20% decrease in the distance walked by nurses! Sue Graziano, Interim CNO, and Dora Krauss, Director of Education, along with their colleagues will be educating the clinical staff on our plans for hourly rounding.

The combination of modern technology, compassionate care, and diligent attention to patients is what will continue to make NCH a leader in delivering healthcare at the highest level. Thank you for being part of this continuous transformation.

Respectfully,



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