

# Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most

August 28, 2008

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The feeling of a **new school year** is in the air at NCH.

This week we welcomed a new orientation class of 18 LPN students from Lorenzo Walker, two Radiology tech students from Edison State College, and two Florida Gulf Coast University nursing students. These new recruits—combined with our 3-South residency unit, the Nova third-year medical students, the Physician Assistant students, the Edison nursing students, and the Wolford Certified Nurse Anesthetist students—make a huge statement about our role at NCH as a **learning center** for all of our community's health care professionals.

For the past eight years, in fact, NCH has redoubled its support of health care continuing education. We have helped colleagues at all levels obtain their high school degrees, become Care Technicians, progress to LPNs, and finally become RNs. We assist our two-year RNs in obtaining Bachelors degrees. Many have progressed to the MBA or Master of Nursing level. And in the last two years, we've celebrated three employees—Patti Anzalone, Tracy King and Gail Dolan—who have, impressively, earned their Ph.D. degrees.

Why, you may ask, does NCH invest so significantly in continuing education?

The answer is that continuing education for health care professionals is, in a word, "*imperative.*" In our field, nothing stays the same. Think back to what you were doing five years ago, the equipment and methods you used to treat patients. If you compare then to now and then anticipate how we might be serving patients five years from now—you will see three dramatically different pictures.

Five years ago, nurses documented by paper and administered medications using multipart forms. Today, documentation is digital, and medication administration is assisted with bar code readers. Over the past year, OR and ER have used computer physician order entry, which will be adopted throughout the hospital this fall. Deciphering handwriting will be a thing of the past. Computers will assist in the recall of 6,000 medications.

So education prepares us for change. Change prepares us for the future.

That was essentially the message that I shared with Elizabeth Diaz at 6 a.m. this past Sunday, as she finished her night shift on the 3-South Residency Unit. Her mentor nurse, Lisa Beatty, had asked Elizabeth to share her career changes. Over the past six years, thanks to continuing education, Elizabeth has graduated from Unit Secretary to Care Technician to today's resident RN on 3S, before she joins her home team on 2N.

Elizabeth's story was the inspiration for this *Straight Talk*. Her example reminds us that individual learning and growth is vital to individual success, and to more effectively serving our patients and our community.

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D.