

March 19, 2009

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

One reason why NCH has gained a national reputation as a healthcare system of high quality is our reliance on the most sophisticated medical technology.

Indeed, it's not an overstatement to say that **medical technology** is key to NCH's success. I was reminded of this in a conversation with Debbie Ellis, R.N., who told me how our use of new technology made such a difference for two patients last week.

- The first was Dr. Robert Pascotto, Jr.'s minimally invasive mitral valve repair, one of the four valves in the heart that can become dilated allowing blood to flow backwards. Dr. Rob Statfeld was the anesthesiologist who provided safe monitoring. The patient was sitting up the next day and feeling well.
- The second was Dr. Wally McLean's performing NCH's first myomectomy (removal of a benign fibroid tumor from the uterus) using the da Vinci Robot on a woman who didn't want a hysterectomy. This patient, too, was quickly on her way to recovery.

These are just the two most recent examples of our use of current technology to improve healthcare outcomes. The beauty of these new technologies is that patients recover faster with only small incisions. Patients who have prostate and uterus removals typically go home the next day and can return to a normal life within days. A few patients even go home the same day and back to work in a week. The pain of surgery is greatly reduced because there is no large incision to heal.

Over the past four years, our surgeons have performed over 720 surgeries using our two da Vinci Robots. Drs. Bill Figlethaler and Michael D'Angelo have led the way by removing cancerous prostates (prostatectomy). In fact, working with their ultra-efficient operating room team, our surgeons hold the distinction of having performed five prostate removals in one day—and still finishing by 5 p.m.!

Meanwhile, Dr. Ed Grendys has been using the da Vinci machine to develop the GYN/Oncology program on the North Naples campus. This program is aided by the newly redecorated Connie Eaton Women's Center wing on the fourth floor, where women recover in a warm, friendly environment.

Our history is one of bringing many other examples of new technology and procedures to southwest Florida, including the CyberKnife, PET/CT scanning, Code Save-A-Heart, pressure sore prevention, and most recently, MRSA screening in the ER for high-risk patients.

Technology, of course, is only as good as the professionals who work together as a team to perform the operations. Watching the entire procedure from the time a patient is brought into the room to "turning over" the room to prepare for the next patient is like viewing a well-coordinated ballet. Clinical Coordinator Dawn Hutchison-Finucan and her team make the process look so easy and routine. The sign of an expert is one who makes the difficult look easy. Ours is truly a team of experts.

NCH is busier today than we have ever been in the past. This is testimony to our reputation for quality. And that, in turn, is testimony to the combination of cutting-edge technology and compassionate care that we deliver. I again thank you all for your wonderful "*can-do*" attitude that serves our community and ensures our success.

Respectfully,



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

P. S. Feel free to share *Straight Talk* and ask anyone to email me at allen.weiss@nchmd.org to be added.