

August 27, 2009

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I am extremely pleased to inform you of another first for our community. Today, we are announcing that NCH Healthcare System and the internationally-renowned substance abuse treatment leader **Hazelden** will be forming a **clinical partnership** to address the growing problem of alcohol and drug addiction in our community.

Hazelden Foundation (www.hazelden.org), founded 60 years ago in a Minnesota lakeside farmhouse, is today one of the world's largest and most respected not-for-profit alcohol and drug addiction treatment centers. Hazelden offers specialized rehab programs for women, health care professionals, and families suffering the effects of addiction. Hazelden operates addiction treatment centers in Minnesota, Oregon, New York, and Illinois, and is acclaimed for publishing, research, and professional education activities.

Starting in the spring of 2010, Hazelden Florida will establish a new treatment facility near the NCH downtown campus, offering an innovative recovery community model involving partnerships with Naples area medical, recovery and business organizations. The Hazelden clinical model will feature integrated residential and outpatient treatment services including a lifestyle approach to recovery, with programming for up to 18 months post-treatment, along with an intermediate level of addiction services treatment. This program will initially provide treatment programs for adults with a total capacity of 48 residential beds and a full array of family and outpatient services.

Hazelden will be deeply committed to Southwest Florida with a special focus on alumni programs, family programs, screenings, brief interventions, educational services and other community services. The program's goal is to reduce treatment costs and provide a continuous support system at a patient's home, work and in the community.

To put this partnership in perspective, let me share two conversations I had while rounding downtown this past weekend, and some facts from Hazelden's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Marv Seppala, who has already lectured at NCH.

- RNs Ethel Peterson and Niki Saltzer told me we have been overwhelmed lately with patients with psychiatric issues requiring alcohol detoxification. We have had to administer huge quantities of medication to help the patients in the 4SE Behavioral Health Unit through recent alcohol crises.
- Separately, Ken Goodwin, MHT and Cori Ragasa, RN from our 6SE closed unit volunteered how pleased they were using Hazelden's patient educational materials. (That was *as* I shared with them the plans for Hazelden to come to Naples.)
- Finally, Dr. Seppala reported these "sobering" statistics: 40% of us have suffered temporary alcohol problems; 10-20% of Americans have abused alcohol; and 3-10% are alcohol dependent. Medically, alcohol causes 100,000 deaths per year, 90% of all liver disease, 72% of pancreatitis, and 41% of seizure disorders. The cost of alcohol abuse is \$300 billion, which is 15-25% of the overall healthcare budget.

In sum, the clinical partnership of Hazelden Florida and NCH—the first such collaboration in the U.S.—is another significant step in community service for two respected, mission-driven institutions.

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.