

October 29, 2009

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

We all search for heroes to emulate in our lives.

We are fortunate at NCH Healthcare Systems to have 600 such “*heroes*” in our midst—the members of our medical staff, whose life’s work is dedicated to serving the community.

In 2001, Judge **Christine Greider**, who was co-chair of the NCH Hospital Ball Committee, came up with the idea of recognizing a *Physician of the Year*. And so, for the past eight years, our physicians have nominated potential recipients of this coveted award which recognizes all that is noble about the medical profession.

The *Physician of the Year* is selected by medical staff colleagues, making it a high honor of peer distinction. Over the years, scores of worthy nominees have been selected. Past *Physicians of the Year* winners, from 2001, have been **Drs. Robert Tober, John Gridley** (sadly deceased), **Christine Forszpaniak, Jeffrey McCartney, Jacob Jordan, Hermes Koop, Gerhard “Tony” Krembs** and **Daniel Morris**.

Each of these winners is a true “hero” for all of us. Each is a person of character, ethics and integrity, able to balance many different duties, interests and responsibilities daily—and they do this with grace and aplomb. Most important, they have all been recognized by their colleagues for their unstinting commitment and devotion to serving patients.

This year’s NCH Hospital Ball, with the theme of “A Venetian Voyage,” will be held on November 14th (www.venetianvoyagegala.com/about.html). All proceeds will go to the Orthopedic Center of Excellence, the busiest joint replacement hospital in Florida and the second busiest in the country for Medicare patients. (The NCH Ball is fun with a purpose.) Orthopedics, as of Monday, is once again housed in our newly-renovated 5 North floor, under the experienced management of RN **Sue Graziano**, Nursing Microsystems Director of Orthopedics and the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Center.

This year’s nominees for *Physician of the Year* are (in alphabetical order): **Drs. Howard Cohen** (Critical Care/Pulmonary Medicine), **Alberto De La Rivaherrera** (Emergency Medicine), **Paul Jones** (Family Medicine), **John Lewis** (Emergency Medicine), **Deborah Lopez** (Pediatric Critical Care), **Leon Mead** (Orthopedic Surgery), **Charles “Todd” Vedder** (Pediatrics) and **Michael Vickers** (Neurology).

These extraordinary eight physicians share the esteem of their colleagues, our hospital, and our community.

They represent the very best qualities that distinguish all the dedicated men and women of the NCH medical staff as true community “heroes.”

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.