

November 19, 2009

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Earlier this week, **Phil Dutcher** and I heard Newt Gingrich, former Speaker of the House, discuss the economy, technology and globalization—which he believes are the three major challenges/opportunities to healthcare today. We have been responding to the challenges and embracing the opportunities, as evidenced by these four encouraging subjects.

- First, last Saturday's NCH Hospital Ball was a great success. Chaired by **Matt Mathias, Brenda O'Connor, Sharon Treiser** and their co-chairs, 545 guests honored **Dr. Howard Cohen** as *Physician of the Year* along with *Nurse of the Year* **Erin Raney**. **Drs. Alberto De La Rivaherrera, Paul Jones, John Lewis, Deborah Lopez, Leon Mead, Charles Vedder** and **Michael Vickers** were also honored by their colleagues as *Physician of the Year* honorees. Others honored were *Compass Award* winner **Dr. Rick Buechel**, *Rising Star Nurse* **Amy Byal**, *Indirect Patient Care Nurse of the Year* **Paul Farmer**, and *Direct Patient Care Nurse of the Year* **H.L. Lawrence**. Congratulations to all!

One highlight was an inspirational video featuring the eight *Physician of the Year* nominees. Produced in-house by **Paul Adrianzen, Kris Schumacher** and **Dan Landrum**, this short feature gives you a first-hand view of the passion that goes into becoming a great physician. You can view it at <http://www.nchmd.org/poy>.

Second, I'm pleased to report that our partnership with Cerner Corporation, our information technology (IT) management provider, is going great. The transition to Cerner has been virtually seamless. And we have successfully implemented two significant projects long in the planning stages:

E-Care is a simplification for electronic documentation for nurses. Eight years ago, our nurses led the way with pioneering efforts in electronic documentation. Recently, we wanted to reduce nurse computer time away from patients, so a front-line team of nurses, led by **Associate CNO Laurie Zone-Smith**, redesigned and simplified nursing documentation. This is only one example of our continuing efforts to upgrade and improve our systems.

Lynx is the second major IT initiative, led by **Sue Slaght**, Director of Reimbursement and Revenue Cycle Oversight. Cerner has used this Emergency Report Facility Charge Ticket as a coding and billing solution successfully in 165 hospitals. Our goal is to capture charges at the time of a visit, so we can improve accuracy and efficiency.

- Third, we continue to manage our System finances prudently and maintain a stable operation. This kind of fiscal management enabled us to show a modest gain from hospital operations for the fiscal year, which ended September 30. Positive investment income and gifts from the community helped further. So in light of these results, we will now proceed with a Board-designated bonus of 1.5% for all eligible colleagues (those who have worked for 500 or more hours and not had significant disciplinary actions). The bonus will be shared during Thanksgiving Week.
- Fourth, as of today, all our campuses are officially "tobacco free." I'm delighted to have heard good reports from a number of colleagues who have stopped smoking or whose spouses or significant others have stopped. Please note that people who stop smoking add an average of 3-5 years to their lives. And please have compassion for those who are struggling to stop.

Let's all stay positive, as we have so many good things to share as the holiday season approaches.

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.