

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



February 18, 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Congratulations, Collier County! Where we live matters to our health, and we live in a great place.

We are officially the healthiest residents in Florida, according to a report released this week by an objective study jointly performed by the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute (www.countyhealthrankings.org).

This news confirms that we are doing many of the right things to have the best **Health Outcomes** among all 67 counties in Florida. In this sophisticated compiling of information, health outcomes are measured by the objective measures of mortality (length of life) and morbidity (quality of life including self-reported health status, poor physical health days, poor mental health days and low birth weight).

A few technical notes: Because of the difficulty of obtaining valid data, the mortality data was obtained from 2004 to 2006 and the majority of the morbidity data was obtained from 2002 to 2008 with the exception of the low birth weight information, which was from 2002 to 2006.

This study also analyzes and weights all the factors that impact health. According to these experts, health behaviors account for 30% of overall importance; social and economic factors 40%; clinical care, 20%; and physical environment, 10%. To use one example: Health behaviors include smoking, diet, exercise, alcohol use and risky sex behavior, and on this health factor, Collier County is ranked sixth in the state.

Over the past five years, the NCH Healthcare System has received more than 90 awards for quality. The basis of these accolades is for the most part the same objective mortality and morbidity data used for the health outcomes county health rankings. HealthGrades (www.HealthGrades.com) and Thomson Reuters (<http://thomsonreuters.com>) also have come to a similar conclusion—we are helping to produce wonderful results for the community we serve.

For our 3,500 colleagues (including 630 physicians), our primary job is to safeguard and enhance the well-being of the residents of southwest Florida. In that respect, this Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin report is outstanding news for all of us who live and work here.

But as the health behaviors data suggests, there are many areas for improvement. Our challenge now is to ensure—through preventive programs to promote proper nutrition, fight obesity, encourage exercise, smoking cessation and to improve access with lower costs by increased efficiency as we continue to improve quality—that our county sets the highest standard in Florida.

We hope that this news will be another factor in persuading folks already considering coming to Florida to choose southwest Florida first.

This comprehensive report is validation that we have accomplished many of our community goals. But we have much more to do.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allen".

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.