

January 28, 2010

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Most of us who went into healthcare did it to "make a difference." Sometimes, in the daily crush of activities, we lose sight of that simple, yet profound, goal.

I was reminded of it this week when I got an email from Director of Psychiatric Medicine **Susan Kimper, RN.** Susan shared something she had received from **Tom O'Connor**, one of our stalwart psychiatric social workers. Here's what Tom said (edited only to comply with the HIPAA privacy law):

Last Friday in Naples, a gentleman holding his three-year-old daughter approached me and asked if I remembered him. After I hesitated, he said that he had been on our unit 10 months ago. He said he was now "10 months sober." He thanked us for all we had done. He introduced me to his wife standing nearby, and it was obvious that she too was very appreciative. He said that he was still using helps he learned in the group therapies and mentioned one specific hint that "I pass on to my friends when they have trouble sleeping." I thanked him and wished him continued success.

Many times we don't realize the difference we make in so many ways—from the very personal, as in Tom's story about helping keep this family together; to our more general initiatives to educate about wellness and illness prevention. As NCH increases its focus on community education at all levels—patients, families, physicians, students and researchers—our relationships with esteemed national institutions allow us to expand the community's healthcare knowledge.

For example, Tuesday night a week ago, we hosted both Hazelden Treatment Center and Jackson Labs in different portions of the Telford Auditorium. And the next night, it was Johns Hopkins' turn.

- **Hazelden** had almost 200 residents in the audience to hear William Cope Moyers, Hazelden vice president and author of *Broken*, his personal story of rehabilitation. Mr. Moyers praised NCH's relationship with his company, the premier drug and alcohol addiction rehabilitation institute in the world. (By the way, the speaker's last name may sound familiar; he is the son of famed TV commentator Bill Moyers.)
- Jackson Labs, a leading genetics research lab, shared its view on the scope and future of personalized medicine, with about 80 NCH colleagues. Harvard Professors Raju Kucherlapati and Mason Freeman, along with Drs. Edward Abrahams, Executive Director of the Personalized Medicine Coalition, and Rick Woychik, President and CEO of the Jackson Laboratory, shared their visions. In the not-too-distant future, they said, newborns will have their genetic code made clear at birth. In advance, people will know the risks for various diseases and which medications will prove effective or cause side effects. NCH intends to be an active player in this exciting and hopeful healthcare future.
- **Johns Hopkins** Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology Dr. Frederick Brancati spoke the next night at the Quarterly Medical Staff meeting to our colleagues on "Glycemic Control in Type 2 Diabetes: How tight is too tight?" Sounds complicated. But in plain English, Dr. Brancati dissected the controversy between geriatric physicians and endocrinologists (physicians specializing in diabetes) about targeting the right level of blood sugar so that diabetes is controlled and how complications from excessive treatment can be avoided.

Enhancing our role as a local source for leading-edge healthcare education and research is one more way in which NCH and its dedicated employees will continue to "make a difference" in our community.

Respectfully,

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

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