

## *Reject the New NCH Admissions Policy*

Important Changes in the Care Model Being Implemented at Naples Community Hospitals (NCH)



### **What has changed for you as a patient at NCH?**

A new admissions policy at NCH will infringe on your fundamental right to choose who will direct your care while hospitalized. Under their new policy, NCH will prevent non-employed primary care physicians from retaining their admitting privileges, and eliminate outside hospitalist teams and replace them with their newly-hired, employed NCH hospitalists.

Therefore, your own physician and their trusted hospitalists that have access to your entire medical history will no longer be able to coordinate your continuity of care from the hospital back to home or an intermediate rehabilitation facility. In essence, your doctors will become VISITORS in your care throughout the hospital stay, not the team actively directing your care.

### **Can my primary care doctor still participate in my care?**

No. Your existing medical care team that knows you best will be a “visitor” and only be able to make recommendations to NCH hospitalists, who are under no obligation to follow those recommendations.

Further, your primary care physician team will not be able to admit, write orders or recommendations in the patient chart, choose consultants, or coordinate your discharge.

Your choice, as the patient, is in jeopardy.

### **Why is this not in your best interest?**

Patients admitted by employed physicians who won't have access to outpatient records due to this policy could be at increased risk, as those physicians won't have your complete medical history. And most likely, the hospital will not even notify your own physician that you have been admitted. If your own physician does consult with the employed hospitalists, it cannot be written in your chart, and it is like that consultation never happened, particularly because patients will have multiple hospitalists during one stay.

This model erodes the sanctity of the patient-doctor relationship that this community has developed and enjoyed for many years. It would prevent your trusted physician from truly having a say in your hospital care, a time when patients are most vulnerable.

### **What is a Hospitalist?**

Hospitalists are specially trained physicians who are dedicated to taking care of you while you are in the hospital. Under the current, standard model, independent teams of dedicated hospitalists can work closely with your primary care physician and the team at NCH to provide the highest level of care. Your physician's designated hospitalist team would have access to your medical records from the office in order to provide seamless continuity of care while you are in the hospital.

The new NCH hospitalists will not have shared access to your primary care physician's notes and records, and will have no requirement to obtain them.

### **Has anything changed with the specialists at the hospital?**

The NCH hospitalist team is not obliged to consult your current specialists such as a cardiologist, urologist, gastroenterologist, etc. It is up to the NCH hospitalist to write the order for the consult. They may consult a different doctor from the NCH group of specialists.

There are no guarantees that your choice will be respected. Your primary care team will not be able to direct the orders for specialists.

## Why did NCH implement this policy?

The answer to this is elusive. It appears that a pilot project NCH started in summer of 2018 was a feasibility study of a closed admissions policy at the hospital. This brief pilot project in a relatively small section of each NCH hospital appears to have been designed in order to favor a closed system.

## What are the initial results of the NCH pilot project?

With the increase in NCH hospitalists and ancillary help given to the pilot project, NCH reports an increase in patient satisfaction scores, among other data points, however that data has not been made public.

This model has been presented as an improvement, so you can be treated more quickly and discharged sooner. However, the same tools and support have not been offered to the non-employed doctors to achieve equal or even better results.

If the other physicians who currently treat patients at NCH could participate in the pilot, as they have requested, one could compare apples to apples.

## What have hospital physicians communicated to NCH?

According to Dr. Paul Jones, immediate past president of the NCH medical staff, not a single physician at the October 23rd medical staff meeting voted in favor of expanding NCH's new policy.

Instead, they unanimously voted to urge the NCH board of trustees and administration to reconsider other options to collaboratively include all physicians in the community that meet the desired standards.

## Could NCH set standards for all doctors in their facilities?

Yes, they can and have for many years. All of the independent doctors welcome goals that improve patient care and satisfaction. In fact, many of the independent doctors have high qualifications, national recognition, and extraordinary achievements.

Many independent physician practices in this community have achieved the highest standards of care per Medicare guidelines. And our community's "concierge" physicians have exemplary credentials and medical knowledge to deliver unparalleled care, top in the nation.

The vast majority of physicians on the NCH medical staff are not employed. Excluding the valuable knowledge and experience that these independent groups of physicians provide to our community could have a detrimental effect on the quality of care at NCH hospitals.

## What does it mean for you as a patient at NCH?

NCH appears to be moving systematically towards a closed medical staff system, initially prohibiting all non-employed Primary Care teams, concierge doctors, and hospitalists from admitting their patients.

As the plan rolls out floor by floor, then the closed system will be achieved. NCH will no longer exist as a Community hospital where more than 700 physicians, independent and employed work collaboratively for the best care of patients today.

## How has the community responded?

95% of local physicians surveyed do not agree with the policy. More than 10,000 Community Members have signed our petition to date. Statewide experts and local leaders have joined CCMS in publicly expressing concern about the policy:

- Florida Medical Association
- American College of Physicians, Florida Chapter
- Florida Geriatrics Society
- Florida Osteopathic Medical Association
- Mayor Bill Barnett, Naples City Council
- Collier County Commissioner Andy Solis
- Collier County Commissioner Penny Taylor
- *Naples Daily News* Editorial Board

(View statements at [ccmsonline.org/patientchoice](http://ccmsonline.org/patientchoice))

## What can patients do?

Ask your doctor for more information and visit [ccmsonline.org/patientchoice](http://ccmsonline.org/patientchoice) for educational resources.

Sign the petition at [ccmsonline.org/patientchoice](http://ccmsonline.org/patientchoice), supporting the patient's right to choose their physician.

Voice your concerns to the NCH Board of Trustees, who are the leaders who could overturn this policy.

Write letters to local organizations such as your City Council, the Collier County Board of Commissioners, and the *Naples Daily News*.

Send the [ccmsonline.org/patientchoice](http://ccmsonline.org/patientchoice) link to all your friends and family, encouraging them to take action.

**Visit [ccmsonline.org/patientchoice](http://ccmsonline.org/patientchoice) to learn more, sign a petition, and share your concerns.**



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