



CEO News & Views

Bruce Schroffel



UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO HOSPITAL
ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Of U.S. News & World Report and Being One Of The Best

A great honor: the latest *U.S. News & World Report* listing of “America’s Top Hospitals” came out last night, and we are ranked among the best nationally in six specialties this year.

We are among the top 25 in Endocrinology, Gynecology, Kidney Disease, Rehabilitation Medicine, and Respiratory Disorders. Rheumatology, which somehow fell off the list of the best in 2005,

returned this year with a bang. The magazine ranks it as 21st in the nation. To put that in perspective, I should add that the magazine makes these choices from the departments at more than 5,000 hospitals. Being cited once is quite a compliment. Being cited six times is fantastic.

I heartily congratulate the clinicians and administrators and staffers at the six great UCH programs recognized as among the best in the country. Yet I think we’re all also vaguely uncomfortable with these kinds of lists. They are not always scientific. Most ignore the sometimes-volatile variables – the unique complexities of each patient; shifting finances; an employee’s mood, etc. – that go into successfully preserving or restoring one human’s health. And they are not comprehensive. There’s an enormous amount of wonderful care and research being delivered at UCH and in other hospitals that go un-mentioned.

Yet many people base their health care decisions on rankings, whether or not they’re as scientifically calculated as *US News’s*. It’s

the reason we *do* promote the legit ones as evidence of our clinical excellence. And even though we know that rankings are in reality as much art as they are science, I admit I want us to be #1 in all of them.

Meanwhile, On TV...

Incongruously enough, we were named one of America’s Top Hospitals on the day a local TV station broadcast a story about an “adverse event” – an unexpected death – that occurred here last October.

Losing a patient is always the worst thing that can happen at any hospital. We – the immediate caregivers and staff as well as everyone else here – are profoundly saddened, concerned about the patient’s family, and determined to prevent such a thing from ever happening here again.

I want to use this space to note that I am also proud of our response to this event. We owned up to it. We shined a light on it in order to find out what might have done differently. We made changes, adding redundant safety precautions to prevent the same circumstances from arising again. And we communicated. Internally, as you know, Dr. Steve Ringel wrote at length about the case in the most recent issue of *UCH Insider*. We are reaching out to the aggrieved family as sympathetically, sensitively and helpfully as we can. Externally, we continue to cooperate fully with the media. Such actions obviously have risk. But confronting difficult issues honestly and openly is exactly how health care and science advance. In my mind, it is a distinguishing feature of an elite organization. I’m proud of all of you who have

provided another kind of evidence that we are one of America’s best hospitals.

Getting To Know Our Neighbors

UCH employees soon will launch one of our neater community outreach efforts. It’s our Back to School Drive.

With the move now solidly behind us, we went to two nearby Aurora elementary schools to ask how the people at Anschutz Medical Campus could help them. Their biggest need, it turned out, was school supplies. Years of challenging budgets have left them short. So from July 16 through August 6, we will ask you to bring school supplies to campus to donate supplies to the schools. You’ll find bins in each UCH building. (A map and a list of the most-needed supplies will be on iAmaze by the end of this week.) We – all of us – will present them to the schools at General’s Park just before classes begin.

These kinds of activities, I remind you, are as rewarding for us as they are for the recipients. For that and other reasons, some staffers said in the Employee Opinion Survey they had a perception that we are not involved in our neighborhoods enough. While we are involved in multiple community activities, there is always room for more. The Back to School Drive is just the start of many planned activities with schools in our new neighborhood. They include everything from health fairs to adopting families during the holidays to book drives.

We’ve “Put It Out”

As promised by all the educational programs, quit-smoking resources and signs around the hospital, UCH officially became

For the health of our patients, families and employees...

We’ve Put It Out!



tobacco-free on July 1.

It was also the day I received a really touching note from Bruce Evans, MD, who reported his “very pleasurable experience of making frequent rounds in the areas regularly used by smokers, both employees and patients/visitors. I found (and spoke with) very few smokers. What I did see were a lot of my co-workers from Engineering Services, HSS, Marketing, and the Tobacco Cessation Task Force working to change our local environment for the better. That included signage changes that started early in the day to the latest edition of *The Insider*. Much of today’s efforts were the result of months of planning.”

While Bruce, ever the leader, generously rushed to cite Joe Hart, Bill Sonn and Richard Beougher and their teams as people who “made a difference” in this effort, he modestly neglected to mention that he and Diann Eason provided not only the energy for but the skilled implementation of this much needed, admirable initiative. They made this a better place, and we are even stronger for having people like them on board.

Sincerely,

Bruce Schroffel
President and CEO