Spring 2012

As the new chief executive for Swedish, I would like to take a moment to introduce myself and share what a privilege it is to serve the community in this new role. I have been with Swedish for 12 years in a variety of capacities, and have always taken great pride in working for this organization. My pride stems from the long tradition of clinical excellence, our dedicated team of physicians and staff, and an unwavering focus on patient-centered care, all of which have been at the heart of Swedish since its founding in 1910.

As many of you know, Swedish entered into an affiliation with Providence Health & Services on February 1, 2012. Providence is one of the largest health systems in the country with 32 hospitals in the Western United States, including locations in Centralia, Olympia and Everett. As part of a restructuring, our previous CEO and former author of this newsletter, Rod Hochman, M.D., has taken on a new role at Providence. He is now a group president, overseeing key functions across Providence’s multi-state network, including clinical quality and physician services. Rod will also have accountability over Providence’s Oregon and Washington operations and will remain closely involved in activities at Swedish.

To share some of my background, I have 25 years of experience in health-care administration and have worked in every type of health-care delivery model, including a multi-state network, rural health care, and a for-profit HMO. The most rewarding experience, however, has been my time at Swedish. I joined the organization in 2000 and worked in several roles, including serving as vice president of Swedish’s medical group, chief strategy officer, and chief administrative officer for Swedish’s Ballard, Issaquah, Mill Creek and Redmond campuses.

Building upon our recently completed five-year strategic plan

I look forward to picking up where Rod left off. Under his leadership, we completed a five-year strategic plan to prepare the community for the future of health care. I am proud to report that we achieved every objective within the plan.

Among the highlights:

- We strengthened our culture of clinical quality and patient safety and were named one of the nation’s top hospitals by the Washington, D.C.-based Leapfrog Group.
- Through our new locations on the Eastside and Northend, we created a regional delivery network that allows us to provide as much care as possible in local communities, while offering the back-up of our highly sub-specialized resources in downtown Seattle.
- We completed one of the most successful implementations of an electronic health record system in the country.
- We expanded the community safety net by increasing our uncompensated care and community benefits to $140 million per year.
Now that a strong strategic foundation has been laid, my priority is to ensure our operations are extremely well-managed so that we can continue delivering excellent health care to the community even amid a sluggish economy and industry turbulence. With high unemployment in the region, Swedish continues to see fewer commercially insured patients and more who are either uninsured or covered by Medicare or Medicaid, which do not adequately cover the cost of providing our services. We also continue to be impacted by federal and state cuts in health-care funding.

I have every confidence in Swedish’s plan to navigate these challenges. We are working to fundamentally transform the way we deliver care so we can become leaner and more efficient while maintaining and improving the high level of quality care we are known for.

**How we are responding to health-care challenges**

One of the reasons we affiliated with Providence is so we could join forces to respond to a changing health-care environment on behalf of the community. Because our combined operations span a contiguous geography from Centralia to Everett, we believe we can be more effective for the Puget Sound region by working together than we can by working on our own.

By collaborating and sharing resources and expertise, we are better positioned to increase access to health-care services in local communities, improve clinical quality and reduce costs, as well as provide consistent and first-rate health care across Western Washington.

Another goal of the affiliation is to gain efficiencies by sharing administrative functions such as human resources, information services, accounting and payroll. We also believe we can achieve significant savings by standardizing the types of supplies and equipment we purchase. This will allow us to focus a higher percentage of our resources on clinical care for the community.

Despite a very close collaboration, this remains a unique affiliation in which Swedish will still be Swedish. We are keeping our name and brand, as will Providence, and we will continue to maintain a secular identity and a Swedish Community Board to guide our mission.

**The vital role of philanthropy**

Something I find deeply motivating and inspiring is the support we receive from the community. The number of patients and families who give back to Swedish to show their appreciation and gratitude for the services we provide means a great deal to the organization. It not only makes it possible for us to serve those in need, it also validates our mission and tells us that others believe in high-quality health care for all as much as we do.

In addition, philanthropy has, and will continue to be critical to our operations. Through this innovative affiliation, Providence and Swedish will maintain their individual foundations, which will continue to operate separately. That means gifts made to the Swedish Foundation will only support Swedish, and gifts made to the Providence foundations will only support Providence.
Given the economy and the challenges facing health care, engaging the community in our nonprofit mission is vital to our success. In 2011, Swedish received over $19.8 million in gifts from the community. Including gifts received in Q1 of 2012, we have now raised over $96 million in support of the $100 million Campaign for Swedish. It takes a village to ensure our region has access to high-quality, affordable health care, and we are very grateful for your generous philanthropic support and partnership.

On behalf of the Swedish Senior Leadership Team, the Swedish Community Board and our Foundation Board of Governors, we would like to thank you for your continued support. If you would like to learn more about The Campaign for Swedish and its priorities, please don’t hesitate to contact me directly at Kevin.Brown@swedish.org or Don Theophilus, Executive Director at Swedish Medical Center Foundation, at Don.Theophilus@swedish.org or via phone at (206) 386-2819.

Sincerely,

Kevin Brown
Chief Executive
Swedish Health Services