

Patients First

An Interview with Frank A. Corvino,
President and Chief Executive Officer, Greenwich Hospital

EDITORS' NOTE Frank Corvino is also Executive Vice President of the Yale New Haven Health System. Before he was named President and Chief Executive Officer of Greenwich Hospital in 1991, Corvino was Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at the hospital. Prior to coming to Greenwich, Corvino was an Executive Vice President at Our Lady of Mercy Medical Center in the Bronx, New York, where he also held other management positions. He earned his undergraduate degree in Pharmacy at Fordham University and completed his graduate training at St. John's University. Corvino currently serves on the board of the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA), Greenwich Emergency Medical Services (GEMS), Willow Towers Assisted Living, and the Connecticut Community Bank.



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INSTITUTION BRIEF Located in Greenwich, Connecticut, Greenwich Hospital (www.greenwichhospital.org) is a 206-bed community hospital founded in 1903 and serving lower Fairfield County, Conn., and Westchester County, N.Y. A major academic affiliate of Yale University School of Medicine and a member of the Yale New Haven Health System, Greenwich Hospital has evolved into a progressive regional medical center and teaching institution with an internal medicine residency. The facility represents all medical specialties and offers a wide range of medical, surgical, diagnostic, and wellness programs. Greenwich Hospital completed construction on its main campus in Fall 2005 with the opening of the Thomas and Olive C. Watson Pavilion. Combined with the Leona and Harry B. Helmsley Medical Building, which opened in 1999, the state-of-the-art facility is a model of advanced health care design.

What makes Greenwich Hospital so special?

We focus on providing an extraordinary experience and outstanding medical care for every patient who comes to the hospital. We always put the patient first and work to see things through the eyes of the patient.

Having a culture like this has enabled us to become a recognized leader in patient satisfaction. Two key aspects of our culture are the patient/staff interaction, where we do everything we can to create a cordial and effective relationship; and the staff/staff interaction, where we spend a lot of time training our employees to work as teams and to realize that we need to always put the patient first.

In addition, we have a well-trained and competent medical staff with experience from many of the most prestigious tertiary hospitals in the nation. What makes us special is a combination of outstanding community support, our great medical staff and employee workforce, the latest technology, and a well-designed physical plant.

Has that personal side of the doctor/patient relationship been lost and is it difficult to keep that at the forefront of what you do?

It is more difficult, but it's absolutely essential. Patients want to have a relationship with their physician and we do whatever we can to foster that relationship.

As time goes by, that relationship will grow through the use of information technology. We're installing a new computer software system throughout our entire health system as well as within the medical school in New Haven, and it will bring physicians and patients closer.

One of the applications is called MyChart, where patients can go online and look up lab work, book appointments, and e-mail their physicians. So the relationship will continue and we'll use technology to foster it.

Is the health care profession still attracting the best talent and is there an awareness of the type of fulfillment this career offers?

The people who are the best want to work in this type of culture and environment. Hiring the best people is a core principle of what we do, and one of our major values. We will not lower that standard.

How critical is being community-focused?

We support involvement in community service through participation in organizations like Rotary and membership on local boards of health and human services agencies. I do it and encourage my senior staff to do it. We encourage our employees to volunteer in other community endeavors, because it's an important way to integrate the community with our hospital. We are part of the community, not just people who treat the community. We want to be part of their lives with regard to health.

More than 40 percent of our patients come from Westchester County, so we have people involved there as well as in Greenwich and surrounding communities in Connecticut.

What more must be done in terms of health care reform and are we addressing the real challenges?

For the past 12 months, not much has been done in Congress with all the partisan bickering. Many politicians have lost sight of their mission and the people who elected them to office.

We'll have to see how the 2012 election comes out. My opinion hasn't changed with regard to health care reform because nothing has changed. We still have a shortage of primary care physicians; we still haven't dealt with the issue of malpractice reform or the impending geriatric crisis; we have not increased our incentives for prevention and wellness; and we haven't gotten hospitals and physicians to integrate and work off the same reward system. So nothing has changed in our minds.

However, Greenwich Hospital is well positioned in this era of uncertainty. We're taking a proactive stance to improve quality and decrease costs associated with health care delivery; we're looking at every service we deliver to assure it's of high quality but also cost efficient; and we're working with our colleagues at Yale New Haven Health so that we are fully informed of any changes in the health care environment.

Our health system has created the Northeast Medical Group, which is an affiliated vertical network and system-wide physician group designed to create opportunities for better collaboration, quality of care, and physician alignment. There are over 300 physicians currently in that group.

We know we have the right strategy – it's just a matter of when all the pieces are finalized.

When you joined Greenwich Hospital in 1988, did you believe this is where you would spend much of your career?

Being a CEO in this place has been remarkable. We rebuilt the entire campus, affiliated with the Yale New Haven Health System, became a leader in patient satisfaction, and doubled the size of our medical staff. We have expanded because we have a management team and board of trustees that are very dedicated to our communities. The medical staff and the employees who work here are wonderful human beings. We spend a lot of time looking at who we hire. People cannot just be technically competent; they have to be caring individuals who go the extra mile to exceed patient expectations every time.

The continued success we've had is because everybody is pulling in the same direction. This has led to positive growth for our institution and for health care in our communities, and it has been a lot of fun. ●