

# Restoring Trust at Swedish

by Dr. Rod Hochman

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**Swedish Health Services has been in the news a lot lately. Questions have been raised about the behavior of top leadership, and about communication breakdowns that undermined trust among Swedish caregivers and the community.**

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As the leader of Providence St. Joseph Health, a diverse family of organizations that serves seven states and includes Swedish, I am ultimately accountable for the successes and mistakes of the hospitals in our system. I apologize to the caregivers, physicians, patients and community for the pain the current situation has caused. You deserved better from us — and from me. I hope we can learn from this and move forward stronger and more compassionate.

My connection to Swedish runs deep. I served as the CEO of Swedish from 2007 to 2012, and I personally know the professionalism, commitment and skill of the caregivers and medical staff there. Seattle is my home and Swedish is where my family and I receive medical care. I live just blocks from the Swedish First Hill campus.

Providence St. Joseph Health is a not-for-profit health system that encompasses 50 hospitals, 829 clinics and many other health and social services. As a parent organization, we depend on strong, independent chief executives in all our regions and partner organizations to make decisions in the best interest of their community. We are proud of Swedish and consider it a flagship institution in our system.

I want to emphasize that when it comes to Swedish, Dr. Guy Hudson, the interim CEO of Swedish, is in charge. He has the authority, autonomy and accountability to act on behalf of Swedish patients, caregivers and the community. Dr. Hudson also has my full confidence and complete support.

I am painfully aware that Swedish caregivers have not always felt heard in recent years. But with Dr. Hudson at the helm, I am confident Swedish has the strong leadership it needs to rebuild trust and bring back the culture they worked so hard to uphold and our community deserves. I will do all I can to ensure that Dr. Hudson has everything he needs from Providence St. Joseph Health to successfully restore trust at Swedish.

All of us at Providence St. Joseph Health, including Swedish, continue to believe passionately in putting our patients first and providing high-quality, safe care to everyone we serve.

This mission is intensely personal for me. A few years ago, my older daughter underwent brain surgery at a different institution (due to her insurance at the time). What was supposed to be a 90-minute surgery lasted seven hours and led to massive complications that put her in the ICU twice. At one point, my wife and I were told she wouldn't make it. I thank God every day that she survived and is back to a normal life. This experience brought home for me a deeper understanding of the vulnerability of patients and their families.

You may have read about Talia Goldenberg and the tragic outcome at the Swedish Cherry Hill campus three years ago. The situation was devastating for all involved, and my heart goes out to Talia's loved ones and the team who cared for her. I was deeply moved by what her mother wrote in her recent op-ed, and I agree with her. She is right — this should

never happen anywhere. Despite our best efforts, unintended events occur at even the most respected institutions in the country. When they happen, we must learn from them and do everything in our power to help prevent them from happening again. That is what the team at Cherry Hill did immediately after this event.

We are all learning from what happened at Swedish and improving. I'm confident that Dr. Hudson and the highly dedicated caregivers at Swedish will succeed in restoring trust and moving ahead, better than ever. Together, we will continue to make sure that the Swedish commitment to high quality, safe care remains strong and unwavering.



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*Dr. Rod Hochman is the president and CEO of Providence St. Joseph Health, a not-for-profit health and social services system based in Renton, Wash., with 110,000 caregivers serving across seven states. He was the CEO of Swedish from 2007-2012.*