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# MARK HALLIMEN

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September 2022

My name is Mark Hallimen. I am a native of Rochester and presently residing at MCH.

I contracted COVID-19 in early August of 2021. I was on a flight to LAX when I started to experience flu-like symptoms and tested positive the next day. I was in California for a memorial service but was never able to attend. My illness progressed quickly; to the point of me needing to be hospitalized and eventually intubated and put into a medically induced coma. I came to about five weeks later. I spent the better part of ten months in two hospitals in CA. One of those was supposed to be a facility that specialized in trach weaning. They were not able to help advance my medical status and eventually they wanted me out. There were no decent places to go there and my son, Neil, decided it was time for me to come home.

My sons, Neil and Dan, and my former wife looked at the few places here in NY that would take patients on the ventilator and MCH was one of them. She was very impressed, especially with the Physical, Occupational and Speech therapy programs here. She recommended that I transfer to MCH. The places my sons looked at in CA were, according to them, deplorable, almost human warehouses, all double or triple rooms.

My sons, Neil and Dan, decided he was going to get me home by hook or by crook. He started a Go Fund Me page and raised the \$36,000 it cost to fly me home on an air ambulance. I arrived here June 8. I was on the ventilator, with a trach in my neck and in pretty poor shape. Right away C.J. Rose and Karoline Schulz from Physical and Occupational Therapy showed up. I couldn't sit up on the side of the bed unassisted much less walk. Most doctors in CA told my sons and I that it was highly unlikely that I would ever be off the ventilator and be able to walk around as a free man. I had been bedridden and on the vent almost ten months. Initially, I was given little to no chance of surviving, much less coming off the ventilator. C.J. and Karoline started working with me and I wasn't always easy to work with. The tenacity, patience and confidence they exhibited was unwavering and inspiring. They acted like me healing was a sure thing and just a matter of time.

They went beyond the call of duty! "Oh, you need your bed sore wound tended to, we'll have someone get that done." "You've got no one to help you dress or put you in the shower? We'll do that. Your laundry, we'll take care of that. Your beds unmade, we'll make it for you." The list goes on and on. I want to acknowledge Jill Edgreen in OT, who was just as much there for me, as was Liliana Crane in PT and Jaime Spencer in speech therapy. The staff in PT, OT and Speech therapy are top notch and as nice as they are professional and competent.

They challenged me, kept me safe but let me push myself to my limits. I am so blessed and lucky to have had them! I love them both and will never forget them as long as I live. They are a major asset to MCH and the Rochester community as a whole. Without them I don't know where I would be. Their therapy program is why I chose MCH. All of the staff was fabulous. As to my progress, because of their efforts!

Remember, I'm the guy who couldn't live off the ventilator and couldn't sit up on the side of the bed on June 8. This week I jogged through the therapy clinic!

Sincerely,



Mark Hallimen