



The Thanks We Get

The Thanks We Get features letters of appreciation from patients, their families, the community and the UMDNJ staff. We thank them for reminding us of everything we do to help and heal our patients.

April 2013

*The letter below was sent to **David Livingston, MD**, Chief of Trauma, from an appreciative patient who is also an author and professor of literature at Harvard. **Alicia Mohr, MD**, admitted the patient and **Jordan Fishman, MD**, was one of the chiefs assigned to the case.*

I was taken to the **New Jersey Trauma Center** after totaling my car on I-95. You and your **team** put me together again and I wanted to express my gratitude. I don't know what sort of gift is appropriate for such amazing care, but I did want to say thank you. I also wish to thank the **nurses** who worked twelve-hour shifts until exhaustion and the **x-ray technicians** and **doctors** who were able to maintain their senses of humor. What I'd really like to do is dedicate my novel to you all - but alas - I lost six months of work in the car, so it may take a while.

*The following letter was sent to **Nancy Hamstra**, Director of Hospital Operations, from a fellow employee who had surgery as a result of an injury.*

I want to thank you for all of your efforts during my hospital stay. My husband was very relieved to see you the day of my surgery. When he asked you how much longer I would be, you immediately inquired and found out the answer. The **staff** at University Hospital was very attentive. I was and am, so proud to be associated with this institution. My **doctors, nurses, and nursing assistants** were very professional and special. I am back on a part-time basis and very happy for the welcoming reception and smiling faces on my first day back.

This letter of appreciation was sent to us from the Renaissance Community Development Corporation Center, regarding the help which was provided to them during a race.


I'd like to express my thanks to your **Emergency Medical Services** for assisting us during the "Fathers Running for their Children Race." Although the event finished early, **Kelly Tompkins, EMT**, and her co-workers, stayed until we packed up and the last vehicles left the parking lot. I found the **EMT Team** to be personable, knowledgeable, and approachable. Their dedication to their assignment and the job was exemplary. It speaks volumes of who you are and how your department is run. We appreciate your selfless giving and look forward to working with you next year.

This letter, which came to us via e-mail, proves that excellent care and kindness are remembered and appreciated for many years after the patient has been treated.

Six years ago, I had a ruptured brain aneurysm. I was flown to University Hospital and **Charles J. Prestigiacomo, MD**, saved my life. I will be forever grateful to Dr. Prestigiacomo and the **staff** who took care of me for the following 18 days. Dr. Prestigiacomo continued to follow my care for the next four years. He is a kind and wonderful doctor.




The UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey




The outstanding care provided to this patient, also filled her with hope and inspiration.

Although I sustained substantial injuries in an accident in late July, I am here to report that I received superb **medical and surgical treatment** at University Hospital. As a result, I am determined to make a full recovery and resume my normal schedule of activities. Your care has helped to make that possible. Thank you so much.



Although the outcome may not always be as we hope, if excellent care is provided, it is never forgotten.

I would like to recognize nursing assistant, **William Frost**. He took care of us prior to our loved one passing. He was very nice and was there for us when we needed him. It's not everyday you come across people who actually have a heart and care. Mr. Frost does. He was attentive, pleasant and made us feel comfortable. It's the little things that help families and friends through difficult times. That is why we appreciate Mr. Frost so much.




These 3 comments, sent to the **Center for Breast Imaging**, demonstrate that teamwork "works."

- Techologist, **Yolene Baron**, provided me with excellent service. Please thank her for me.

- **Joyce Goodman**, registration clerk, and **Yolene Baron**, technologist, were kind and very professional. They should both be acknowledged.

- Student, **Peter Mose**, was excellent, kind, courteous, and very gentle.




The following two thank-you letters were sent to Interim President and CEO, **James R. Gonzalez**.

I want to express my sincere appreciation for the care I received while I was a patient at University Hospital. I was operated on by **Soly Baredes, MD**, a dedicated and compassionate

surgeon. I also received superb nursing care. Each and every **nurse** was totally committed to making a difference in my health and in understanding my wife's anxiety. Urologist, **Christina Carpenter, MD**, was also an exceptional care giver. I've been to other hospitals in Essex and Morris County, but the care I received at University Hospital was superior. When I learned that I would be hospitalized at University Hospital in Newark, I was a bit apprehensive about the location. If there was ever a misconception, this was it. You can be very proud of your professional and caring staff.

- Last month, when my mother fell ill, I brought her to your **Emergency Department**. She was admitted and transferred to **F-Yellow**. I would like to thank the **staff** and **doctors** of both departments for helping her during her stay. They were wonderful!



The staff of our Cancer Center is deeply devoted to providing patients with the physical, emotional and spiritual side of healing, as demonstrated in the following letter.

Lillian Pliner, MD and the **staff** of **Hematology/Oncology** in the **Cancer Center** were absolutely wonderful to my mom! Their hard work and diligence will never be forgotten. They were God-sends and we will forever be grateful! Thanks for everything and keep up the great work.



This patient sent his letter to the Bergen Record, the Star-Ledger and the UMDNJ Board of Trustees.

I want to publicly thank the **wonderful people** who work for University Hospital. After working all my life, I suddenly found myself laid off for an extended time, and with no medical insurance. I was diagnosed with late stage kidney cancer. I was apprehensive and overwhelmed by the magnitude of this news. The first hospital I sought help from (a prestigious Bergen County establishment) sent me home only a few hours after I was admitted. They didn't say it, but I felt it was because I had no insurance. I was referred to University Hospital,

where I was greeted with dignity. I went to the **Charity Care Department**— something I never thought I would have to do. Their **staff** and the **social workers** worked fast. When a document was missing, the **supervisors** made phone calls to expedite matters. I was given immediate access to the most wonderful and caring medical staff.

Drs. Soly Baredes, Gina Cambareri, David Dershewitz and **Margarette Bryan** were thorough and explained what needed to be done to ensure the best outcome. I was treated with more than just professionalism - I was treated with compassion. The **receptionist** and **schedulers**, especially **Genoveva Medina** (who was a model of kindness) coordinated appointments and tests to make it easier for me.

Leslie Muniz Jusinski, the assistant manager, stopped her work to deliver blood samples to the lab to prevent any delays. **Leslie, Maria Cunha, APN** and all the **nurses** worked hard to make my stay in the chemo room as pleasant and brief as possible. It was more than just medical treatment. These professionals inspire confidence and hope and make you feel better. They smile at you. They know your name and they want you to do well. It all matters.

The hospital campus, the clinic areas, the waiting rooms, the testing areas all are kept clean by the polite and effective **Environmental Services staff**. To me, this shows the dedication of the entire hospital staff. They seem to know what working together means. And they know how to make everything just a little better for very sick people.

Recently, I thanked an employee of the hospital for her help. She smiled and said, "This hospital is funded by the New Jersey taxpayers like you. You deserve good medical treatment." The taxpayers should know how wonderful University Hospital is and that the staff's love for humanity flows freely there. I am truly thankful and humbled by the kindness, commitment and level of excellence in medical care I received while at University Hospital.

Kindness and excellent patient care are a winning combination as demonstrated by the following two letters to the Ambulatory Care Center.

- **Lucero Palacio** is an efficient, kind and wonderful lady. Thanks for hiring her!

- I am highly satisfied with the prompt care and attentive professionalism provided to me by **Sharon Alexander, Omair Baig, Lyubov Elkanovich** and **Lucero Palacio**. I have been a patient at the Ambulatory Care Center for many years, and I can recognize good service when I encounter it. Your staff is greatly appreciated .

The following five letters were written about the outstanding staff of Medical Special Procedures.

- I would like to thank **Rowena Festa, RN**, for her promptness and kindness prior to my procedure. She not only provided great care, but she knew how to laugh, smile and be friendly to patients – which is an added bonus. She made me relax.

- Just a note to thank **Charito O'Brien, RN**, for taking care of me in recovery after my back procedure. As busy as she was, she still had a smile on her face and made me laugh.

- My appreciation is sent to **Karen Portee, RN**, for her kindness, gentleness and laughter while preparing me for surgery. She made it painless and the IV she started never left a mark! She was great!

- My thanks to **Ramona Smith, RN**, for treating me to the best cup of coffee I ever had. Ramona was friendly and helpful. She deserves a lot of thanks!

- I want to compliment the **staff of Medical Special Procedures**. The **nurses** have been unfailingly courteous and professional. As an RN and nursing executive, it is a pleasure to positively acknowledge your staff for their patient-centered care and safe-patient protection activities. Thanks!

**The following letter was sent from
Denise V. Rodgers, MD, FAAFP, Interim President, UMDNJ
to EMT's **Thomas Steiner** and **Kyle Pirozzoli****



It is with great pride that I acknowledge and recognize your actions on the morning of Tuesday, October 3, 2012. I understand from a UMDNJ police report and a local media report that you were in the area of 224 South Orange Avenue in Newark when you saw smoke coming out of the building. I also understand that a group of civilians were attempting to catch several children who were jumping out of second third floor windows in an effort to flee from the fire raging on the third floor. In total, six people – including four children – jumped out of the burning building to escape the fire.

You immediately went to the scene, despite being off-duty as an EMT, and without hesitation entered the building and began alerting the residents of the threatening fire so they could safely leave the premises. All of the residents were evacuated without harm and the Newark Fire Department was able to bring the fire under control.

EMT Steiner and Pirozzoli, I commend you for an outstanding performance and for demonstrating a high degree of professionalism, initiative, determination, teamwork, and decision making during this incident.

On behalf of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, I want to personally recognize your dedication and commitment to our community. I am deeply appreciative of your courage in responding without hesitation. Your actions were indeed above and beyond the typical call of duty. Dedication such as this is reflective of a true professional who cares not only about the University community, but of the community living in neighborhoods surrounding our Newark campus.



Follow James Gonzalez, MPH, FACHE
University Hospital's Interim President and CEO on Twitter!
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