

AMAZING PEOPLE DOING AMAZING THINGS

This forum is designed to highlight the *amazing efforts* by staff during our Covid-19 response, including the exceptional care and support being provided to our patients, community, and each other.

The following was posted on Exeter Hospital's Facebook page by the daughter of one of our ICU patients who recently passed from the Covid-19 virus. Pictured at right are some of the ICU staff who take care of our most critically ill patients.

There are truly no words I can think of to thank the staff of Exeter Hospital, especially the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) staff. After weeks of caring for my father, we cried together as we said our goodbyes. I could not physically be in the room with him because of this virus, but I never felt he was alone. The staff fought with him every step of the way. He was a fighter. We all thought he was going to kick Covid-19's ass but, despite the best medical care, emotional support, and staff, his lungs were too tired.

Dad spent 24 days in the ICU, most of which he was on a ventilator, all of which his children and grandchildren could not be present, but I never felt he was alone. I was the lucky one in my family, as I was able to speak to this amazing staff and truly feel he was being loved and cared for by people who, despite starting as strangers, never treated him as one. They didn't treat him as one because he wasn't a stranger to them. He was Doug, or as they affectionately called him, Dougie fresh - a husband, father, the greatest grandfather, brother, uncle, cousin and friend. It was as if they knew that from hour one and always remembered that.

The ICU staff showed him the nurturing and affection he deserved to have from his family, if it were different times, and made sure he knew we were with him despite our physical distance. Along with my father, my mom spent a couple weeks in the ICU as well. She was not on a ventilator so she could see not only how hard the staff works, but also the love and affection they showed all of their patients. Mom was treated with the utmost kindness, dignity, and affection. Again, we couldn't be there, but they did everything they could to be sure she was cared for medically and emotionally. They also went above and beyond to allow her to visit with my father despite the incredible hurdles to do so, as well as the physical difficulties. Not just once, but several times, this phenomenal staff moved mountains to allow this couple of almost 51 years to be together. These are things we can never repay but I know it truly meant as much to them as it did to my parents and all of us. The staff did this because it was what their patient's needed and if it can be done, they find a way.

When I said there are no words to say how I feel about each and every staff member of the ICU, I was reminded that not everyone knows that this staff and all the staff at Exeter Hospital, would never allow anyone to be alone. I promised I would tell people. I need you to know that, despite this terrible virus and all the negative ramifications of it, specifically the restrictions on hospital visits of our loved ones, they are never alone. The staff will skip meals, bathroom breaks, fluid intake, and even scheduled leave times, just to be there with our family members.

Nurses, aides, physicians, NPs, PAs, RTs, rad techs, reception staff, cleaning staff, and everyone else are truly there for the patients and their families. I can personally attest to this. They are sad the families can't be there, as they know patients heal better with loved ones by their sides, so they use technology to bring them to the bedside. Yes it is different. And it isn't the best way - but for now it is the only way, so they are doing it. They are laughing, crying, hoping, praying, loving, and being with and there for our family members because we can't be. Trust this is happening and will continue to happen because this staff is beyond words, beyond exceptional, beyond anything I could have wanted during this terrible time.

One last thing, to the nurses who volunteered to be with my father in the end, I forever will remember everything you did in that time. I will never forget how you held his hand, stroked his face, wiped his head, and continuously talked to him and reminded him we were all with him. I will never be able to repay you for making me feel almost as if I were in the room with him. I know it was exhausting to hold the phone to his ear for as long as you did so I could speak to him and he knew I was close by, but you never complained or stopped until I was ready to say goodbye for the final time. I know how hot all the PPE is and you never complained about it or showed me your discomfort. I noticed and I appreciated it and I will always be thankful for it. No words can say thank you enough.

