UHealth Patient Honors Care Team Two Years After Miraculous Recovery

Two years ago, Eli Beer was admitted to the University of Miami Health System and placed in a medically induced coma because of complications from COVID-19. He recently returned to UHealth to honor his care team and show gratitude to all who played a role in his recovery.

Eli Beer with his UHealth care team and their plaques.

Beer, who founded the first-responder organization United Hatzalah of Israel, originally came to UHealth suspecting that he had contracted COVID-19. His COVID symptoms soon worsened to a terrible case of pneumonia that would leave him in the coma for 18 days, with a 50-50 chance of survival.

"He was one of the first youngest and sickest patients in intensive care," said Tanira Ferreira, M.D., chief medical

officer for UHealth. "As he was intubated, his probability of survival was low, and in another hospital, he might have died. We used all the knowledge our dedicated critical care team had with COVID to ensure that he had a chance."

Gratitude

Eli Beer shares his story on his illness, recovery, and gratitude.

Despite moments of uncertainty, Beer ended up making a recovery and was able to fly home to his family in Israel. He remembers the first few months as a struggle to return to his everyday life, with rehab and physical therapy a new part of his daily routine.

"I am now fully functioning as I was before COVID," Beer said. "I am also back to saving lives as a medic with United Hatzalah and even assisted in Ukraine, helping refugees in their crisis. Despite having trouble sleeping at night, I keep thinking how lucky I am to be alive and to help save others."

This mindset drove Beer to return to UHealth and show his gratitude to the doctors, nurses, and the behind-the-scenes staff like cleaning crews and cooks, who he notes are
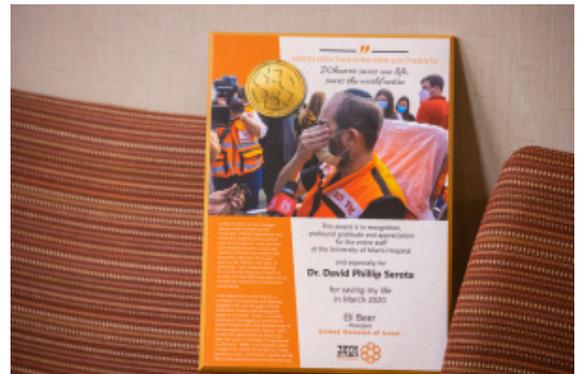
essential in making hospitals operate. Beer reunited with the physicians and staff who helped him two years ago and shared his story, recounting what their care meant to him and giving them personalized plaques.

Tanira Ferreira, M.D., receives her plaque from Eli Beer.

Beer also visited his old UHealth Tower hospital room, reminiscing about the physical condition he was in two years before and how he relied on help with basic functions such as eating and bathing — a humbling experience that taught him gratitude for what he has and for those who help in times of need.

"Since the day I returned to Israel, I had tremendous gratitude for all the work done by the doctors, nurses, and the hospital staff," Beer said. "While I was in the hospital and awake, I saw how hard everyone was working and decided that I would come back with my children to thank them one day. I think my children should see how important gratitude is, as it's one of the Torah's greatest mitzvahs (good deeds) to show thanks."

Plaque close up

Memories of Beer's hospital stay that remain vivid to him include the attention he received from all his doctors and nurses, particularly from Maria Delgado-Lelievre, M.D., assistant professor of medicine and founding director of the University of Miami Comprehensive Hypertension Center. Dr. Delgado-Lelievre earned Beer's trust, he said, and made him feel comfortable and relaxed despite his complex condition. He also recalls details of the staff's care, such as their cleaning floors and windows, coming to his room to bathe him, and putting themselves on the front line so the hospital could continue to run smoothly.

"These special gifts and thanks are the highest honors in our careers, as they come directly from the patients," Dr. Ferreira added. "As we go about saving lives and not taking it for granted, these recognitions reaffirm what we do for a living and our commitment to our patients."

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