



Catholic Health

Kenmore Mercy Hospital

Marketing & Public Relations

950 Elmwood Avenue, Kenmore. New York 14217

(716) 447- 6279 • dcwierle@chsbuffalo.org

Facebook: KenmoreMercyHospital • Twitter: CHSBuffalo

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Contact: Dawn M. Cwierley, Public Relations Manager

Office: (716) 447-6279 | **Cell:** (716) 225-9428 | **Email:** dcwierle@chsbuffalo.org

Kenmore Mercy Celebrates Discharge of COVID-19 Champion

Dr. Mark St. Marie, a longtime Mercy Hospital of South Buffalo gastroenterologist, proudly held up a sign reading “COVID-19 Champion” as staff Kenmore Mercy Hospital bid him an emotional farewell on June 5.

His 67-day journey started at Mercy Hospital where he was diagnosed in March, followed by two weeks on a ventilator and his treatment at the COVID-19 Treatment Facility at St. Joseph Campus.

By late May, Dr. St. Marie was COVID-19 free and transferred to Kenmore Mercy’s Medical Rehabilitation Unit. He still couldn’t walk very far on his own and had trouble swallowing and speaking. The nursing team, as well as physical, occupational, and speech therapists, helped him to improve his strength and mobility, preparing him for life at home.

“When COVID-19 survivors get past the worst of their illness, many find that they need help to return to normal life,” said Kevin Gibson director of rehabilitation services for Catholic Health. “They spend hours a day in rehabilitation at medical rehab units, skilled nursing facilities, outpatient facilities, or at home.”

Physical, occupational and speech language therapists focus on retraining these patients to return to a normal level of function. These treatments include breathing exercises, strengthening, swallowing activities and walking. Up to 20% of patients recovering from COVID-19 will require facility-based rehab.

“There’s been a lot of bumps along the way. The good doctors helped to heal me, but it was the nurses and therapists that put me together again,” said Dr. St. Marie. In addition to rehab, he attributes lots of prayer to helping him make through this tough time.