

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Dawn M. Cwierley, Public Relations Manager**Office:** (716) 447-6279 | **Cell:** (716) 225-9428 | **Email:** dcwierle@chsbuffalo.org**Two Kenmore Mercy Physicians Honored with Doctor of Distinction Awards**

James Fitzpatrick, MD, and Eric Koch, DO, are being recognized by Kenmore Mercy Hospital as Doctors of Distinction this year in honor of their contributions throughout the COVID-19 crisis.

In past years, the award was presented to only one individual. However, amid the unprecedented year, the presentation committee decided to break tradition when both doctors received numerous nominations.

During the height of the pandemic in Western New York, Kenmore Mercy's intensivists were needed at Catholic Health's dedicated COVID-19 Treatment Center at the St. Joseph Campus of Sisters of Charity Hospital. Dr. Fitzpatrick, a pulmonologist and intensivist, as well as Dr. Koch, a hospitalist, stepped up to the challenge of caring for Kenmore Mercy's most critical patients in the Intensive Care Unit.

"Both physicians have demonstrated strength, compassion, and leadership during a year of extreme challenges," said Walt Ludwig, hospital president.

"A well-respected physician leader at Kenmore Mercy Hospital for many years, Dr. Fitzpatrick has shown his true commitment during the pandemic. Dr. Koch, a highly regarded internist and hospitalist, made a significant impact as he cared for patients in our ICU and also guided residents in the care of these critical patients," he added.

Dr. Fitzpatrick, the hospital's vice president of medical affairs, has been with Kenmore Mercy more than thirty years. In 2010, he helped establish the hospital's dedicated intensivist program in the ICU. He regularly sees patients with respiratory illnesses at the Kenmore Specialty Center.

Dr. Koch is a managing partner with Buffalo-Niagara Hospitalists, a group which is dedicated to the care of hospitalized patients from admission to time of discharge. During the COVID-19 crisis, his group was able to also assist in the care of the ICU patients. He has been with Kenmore Mercy for fifteen years and was formerly a flight physician for the U.S. Air Force and Air National Guard.

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