



Steve Jarve was wheeled out of Community Memorial Hospital in Cloquet Dec. 22 to a hero's exit as staff lined the halls and whooped it up. They were celebrating Jarve surviving a 40-day stay at the hospital battling Covid-19. Dave Harwig / Pine Knot News

Patient ...

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Jarve had several big strikes against him during the pandemic. He had been diagnosed with end-stage chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and he wasn't vaccinated against Covid-19.

The COPD keeps him in a mortal state of mind but also inspires him to live each moment fully. He had been dealing with a lung infection, common for the disease that eventually "turns your lungs to tar." But he couldn't quite turn the corner with his regular medications. Then Covid hit. Hard. "It was knocking me in the dirt."

Between COPD and Covid, he could only wonder if this was what his life was going to be like from that point.

"I was on my way out," Jarve said this week from a care facility in Duluth, where he is continuing to rest and rehab after leaving CMS on Dec. 22. "I had one foot in the grave."

Dire

He was, indeed, near death, Potocnik said. She was talking to him about hospice, end-of-life care.

It was likely to be another Covid case that sends staff into a spiral, she said. "It's been so hard on all of us." There's short staff, juggling rooms and patients. Avoiding getting sick themselves.

"Just this one story brings so much hope," she said.

During intensive care, staff were all business, Jarve said. They have little time to encourage or cuddle patients, Potocnik admitted.

Jarve went into med-surge after he leveled off his need for

'It was quite an emotional struggle. ... I prayed to God to take my life. I did.'

oxygen. This is care typically from specially trained nurses for surgical patients. He was in isolation and "still wasn't in good shape," Potocnik said.

But Jarve was rebounding: mentally at first, then physically. He refused to talk about death any more, Potocnik said. "He said 'I'm walking out of here.'"

And as stubborn as he became, the staff matched it. They wanted him to fulfill his promise.

That level of encouragement inspired Jarve even more. "It did give me a whole new outlook," he said. "I have that staff and the Lord to thank for pulling me out of the whole mess I was in."

It's a wonderful team at CMH, Potocnik said. "We all got involved in motivating him. It was a miracle and it took every one of us."

Welcome out plan

In reality, Jarve deserved a higher level of expertise than a community hospital can offer. But there wasn't a choice, Potocnik said. "All the ICUs (in the region) are filled."

It took a lot of work to find a rehab facility for him. And it was a bit bittersweet. Here the staff had helped Jarve will himself to live, and now they were shoving him out the door.

"I walked in with my head down," Potocnik said of breaking the news to Jarve that they'd found a skilled-nursing facility in West Duluth. He wanted to stay.

"I need to reinforce how good

they were to me," Jarve said. "They know I love every one of them."

Potocnik said the idea to line the hospital hallways and for staff to make noise on Jarve's exit came spontaneously. "We wanted extra for him," she said.

Jarve expressed his love and appreciation. And he made a promise. He'd walk back into the hospital some day and let everyone know again how much he appreciates them. He's writing cards

for them during his recovery.

"We're proud," Potocnik said. "He actually walked out of here. Not all of our stories are successful."

Isolation

Jarve had been careful throughout the pandemic. He said he never left his house since it began. He was aware of the danger with his COPD. He doesn't know how he came into contact with the virus. Someone comes in to clean his home just northeast of Cloquet. Just before he got Covid, but not matching the usual time for onset, he had a spatial-distanced exchange with someone who purchased an item from him on the internet.

He doesn't know. "I'd done everything I can. I was cautious

as can be."

Sort of.

When vaccines became available earlier this year, he didn't get one. It was "politics," he said. Today, he doesn't want anyone to go through what he did.

"One hundred percent, get vaccinated," he said.

Jarve still can't wait to get back into his own bed. It's been two major holidays and now nearly two months since he was home.

For now, he's eating a lot, trying to get some weight back and energy.

"It was quite an emotional struggle," he said. "I prayed to God to take my life. I did. I didn't want to be as sick as I was. I got over the negativity. I give thanks every day."

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

STAY SAFE MN

COVID-19 Testing Recommendations

	Not fully vaccinated	Fully vaccinated*
Symptoms of COVID-19	Get tested immediately +	Get tested immediately +
Exposure to someone with COVID-19	Get tested immediately and, if negative, 5-7 days after last exposure +	Get tested 5-7 days after exposure +
Frequent contact with people from other households**	Get tested every 2 weeks +	No need to test unless you had an exposure or have symptoms
In-person school settings	Get tested regularly according to CDC guidance +	No need to test unless you had an exposure or have symptoms
Attended a large gathering indoors, or outdoors with no social distancing	Get tested 5-7 days after gathering +	Get tested 5-7 days after gathering +
International travel***	Get tested 1-3 days prior to travel, 1-3 days prior to returning, and 3-5 days after +	Get tested 1-3 days prior to returning and 3-5 days after +
Domestic travel	Get tested 1-3 days prior to travel and 3-5 days after	No need to test unless you had an exposure or have symptoms
Immunocompromised	Talk to your health care provider	Talk to your health care provider
Health care worker	Follow employer's testing instructions	Follow employer's testing instructions
Asked to get tested by health care provider or health department	Follow testing instructions provided	Follow testing instructions provided
Outbreak or cluster of COVID-19	Follow testing instructions provided	Follow testing instructions provided

*Fully vaccinated = it's been at least 2 weeks since your final COVID-19 vaccine dose.
 **Includes children and staff in child care settings, youth-serving activities and programs.
 ***CDC recommends not traveling internationally until you are fully vaccinated. Some countries will require testing prior to travel. Check requirements of your destination and any layovers before you travel.