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ER staff at CMH makes me proud

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It's an interesting thing to be connected to the same place for one's entire life. For me, I've lived in or been deeply connected to Citrus County since I was born at Citrus Memorial Hospital way back when.

Sometimes, for those of us born and raised in Citrus County, we often talk about all the ways it hasn't really changed over the years. That's not to say there hasn't been progress since my childhood. I mean, let's be honest, we have a Panera Bread, a Jimmy John's and a few Dunkin' Donuts shops. The McDonald's in Lecanto was only a pipe dream when I was a high school student.

Yes, Citrus County has developed quite a bit since graduation.

But the most marked change I've seen over the past 10 years hasn't been in commercial development but rather in the professionalism and service that I experienced at one of our local hospitals during the holiday season. Now granted, I haven't actually been a patient at Citrus Memorial since the day of my birth. But many members of my family and countless friends have all been through those doors at one point or another.

This Christmas, my dad made an unexpected visit to the emergency room. Before arriving at the hospital, my mom had contacted his cardiologist, Dr. Neshant Nerella, who managed to be down in the ER waiting room within minutes of my dad's arrival. He was taken immediately into the treatment room where a flock of nurses began working him up as he talked to a neurologist via Internet uplink.

By the time an hour had passed, not only was he out of the waiting room but the staff had already begun his treatment plan.

After he had sort of settled in and was waiting for a room to open up so he could be admitted, we noticed that my dad, who is a diabetic, was looking a little pale. With all the commotion of getting him to the ER, we hadn't thought about the fact that he needed to eat in order to stabilize his sugar levels.

Now from the majority of my experiences as the family of a patient in the ER, making requests of the staff is not always something one does unless absolutely necessary. Nurses in particular are often overworked and under-appreciated and I can understand where the requests of needy families can be overwhelming. But my dad was looking pretty pasty so we asked the nurse if he could get some food.



Cortney Stewart

SEEING BEYOND

She immediately, and when I say immediately, I mean without hesitation, got us the answer we needed about his dietary restrictions in the ER and brought him a meal. When we asked where a Coke machine was so my mom and I could get something to drink, the nurse asked us what we would like and brought us drinks while we waited with my dad.

Here's the thing, what those nurses did for my family and the way they treated my dad may not necessarily seem extraordinary. They were polite and kind and courteous and didn't treat us as if my dad was an inconvenience. They even treated my mom and I as if our needs were important, too. And while that doesn't seem exceptional, most people who have spent time in emergency rooms will tell you that it is.

I don't know about all the changes at Citrus Memorial. I don't know the inner workings of its new ownership or its financial struggles. But I do know this, when my dad needed immediate care and attention, the staff was focused, perceptive, considerate and acted with urgency. When my mom and I needed things explained to us in a way we could understand, we weren't treated as a bother but were spoken to with respect and clarity. When the staff could do something to meet a small need for us so that we didn't have to leave my dad's side, they were gracious and generous.

I'm sure a lot of people have not had this experience when visiting the emergency room. Perhaps we just had the miracle of the right mix of people at the right time. But the emergency room staff at Citrus Memorial Hospital did their jobs with professionalism and compassion during a very busy holiday season. The ER was full that day but we were not overlooked.

I can't remember all the names of the nurses and staff we dealt with that day. If I could, I would list all of their names here as a small token of my gratitude for giving my dad five-star care and for treating me and my mom with attention and sensitivity. Congratulations, Citrus Memorial ER staff, for a job well done! We are grateful for your service. You make us proud.

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