

14 POINTS ABOUT HOW AND WHY I LOST MY HUSBAND OF 29 YEARS TO COVID 19: A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT AND A CAUTIONARY TALE

As many of you know, my husband recently passed away on May 29 due to complications related to Covid 19. What you may not know is that he contracted it at UMass Memorial Medical Center, while he was there as a patient for unrelated health issues.

1. On April 21 Carlo went to the emergency room with a bad staph infection that led to sepsis, which put him in ICU for 8 days. He also needed a surgery on his cervical (neck) spine, which was the original site of the infection. It took 3 weeks before the doctors could get the staph infection under control.
2. Finally, on May 14 he was able to get his surgery. The very next day on May 15, the hospital called to tell me that Carlo had been in a room with someone who had later tested positive to COVID 19.
3. Between April 21 and May 15, patients were not being tested upon admittance to the hospital unless they showed symptoms. Unfortunately, we all know that many will test positive and show no symptoms. I do not know if Umass has since started testing all patients upon admittance, but I doubt it.
4. Between April 21 and May 15, the hospital changed Carlo's rooms 4 times. This meant that each time he was moved, he was exposed to a new roommate. Each time he had a new roommate, he was increasing his risk of exposure to the virus.
5. While staff wear masks, patients do not. There is no social distancing for patients in a small hospital room with just a thin curtain between them.
6. On May 15 , the day they called to say Carlo had been exposed, they tested Carlo and isolated him by putting him in a private room while they awaited the results. The initial rapid test in the afternoon of May 15 came back negative. On May 16, still isolated in a private room, they gave him an advanced test and that also came back negative around 11:00AM.
7. By 1:00 that same day, they decided to put Carlo back in a room with a different roommate. We all know that just because a person has tested negative 2 days in a row, it doesn't mean that they are clear of the virus. This is why they tell people to quarantine after exposure. A person can test positive up to 14 days after exposure. Carlo should have never been put in a room with someone else so soon.
8. The next day, May 17th, Carlo developed difficulty breathing and became delusional. I communicated with him multiple times a day through FaceTime and noticed the difference right away.
9. By early evening on May 17, he tested positive and was on a ventilator. Unfortunately that meant that because they quickly put Carlo back in the general population after just 2 negative test results, the poor guy who they put him in a room with was likely to test positive.
10. Carlo was on and off a ventilator 3 times before he passed away on May 29 as a result of complications related to COVID 19.
11. I am sharing all of this as a warning. The hospital protocols were not enough to protect Carlo, my husband of 29 years. If they couldn't put a high risk patient in a private room to minimize exposure, what hope do the more healthier low risk patients have?

12. Perhaps the hospital has gotten better with protecting higher risk patients, but I doubt it. They have been publicizing the message “don’t delay care if you are sick because the hospital is safe.” That’s not true. It is not safe.
13. I know that by posting this, many of you will have questions. I will not respond here to your questions. This post is meant to be a public service announcement. I was told by hospital administrators that I was not the only person to lose a loved one because they contracted the virus at the hospital. I am probably one of a handful, however, who would have the righteous indignation to put this out in the public domain.

I do this because Carlo was a man who didn’t mince his words. He never backed away from truth telling. I never do either. Perhaps that’s why our partnership was so strong for 29 years. The truth needs to be told. I can’t bring my Carlo back, but maybe I can prevent this happening to someone else.