

Alvin and Gloria Koppinger

6427 South Saulsbury Street
Littleton, CO 80123

December 23, 2018

Saint Joseph's Hospital
Office of the President
1375 East 19th Avenue
Denver, CO 80218

To the Administration of Saint Joseph's Hospital:

This letter is long overdue to notify you of the excellent care my husband, Alvin Koppinger, received while a patient at Saint Joseph's Hospital in September and October.

While taking a stress test at National Jewish Hospital on September 24th, the test was stopped and the cardiologist sent us immediately to the emergency room at your hospital. From the moment we walked in, we were treated professionally and compassionately. Over the course of the next three weeks, Alvin received emergency care, a heart cath, and ultimately, CABG surgery.

We are fairly recent residents of Denver and had no previous experience with cardiac care, so this was totally new territory for us. The care received in the emergency room and for the heart cath convinced us there was no need to look elsewhere when we were informed that Alvin would need surgery.

I wish I could remember, or had written down, the names of all the staff who so impressed us, but we were in shock this whole time - learning Alvin had serious cardiac disease and needed urgent treatment. We were emotional and uneducated - your staff helped us through all of it. The hospital was clean; the food for Alvin and in the cafeteria was good; we felt safe; the care was professional; staff were friendly and compassionate - not afraid to give us a hug when we needed one; we never lacked for attention or waited for care - staff were responsive and thorough; aftercare and contact were excellent. Staff treated Alvin like a person, not just a patient. They were attentive to my needs and questions as well. We were encouraged to sign up for MyChart and did so. It is the best medical website I have seen. It is complete and user friendly. It is intuitive and responsive.

I dislike speaking in superlatives, but the specific incidents of excellence are too numerous to relate. We have little experience with hospitals but our family does. A sister who just had the same procedure in North Dakota was impressed with all the details we relayed about Alvin's care - things she did not receive. A sister in Arizona with numerous hospital admissions, and the knowledge and means to obtain the best medical care possible, was envious when she heard about the care Alvin received. We have told anyone who will listen that they need to head to Saint Joseph's if they become ill.

I have nominated two specific staff - Rebecca N. (RN in the CV Care Unit) and James Dillingham, PA-C with SCL Heart Institute - for awards, but I want to briefly mention the following staff.

9/24 Admission: Emergency room security staff were thorough but kind. The Admissions Clerk hurried us through to triage. Triage was efficient; we noticed it was very busy but we were quickly transferred to an exam room. Jennifer, RN, and Allison, Tech were efficient and friendly; they put us at ease. Dr. Travis Smith gave Alvin prompt care and treatment, and explained what would happen. We were admitted to the Cardiac procedure unit in a timely manner. James Dillingham was the absolute best and I am submitting him for an award. Dr. Q. Nguyen and his team were superb. Dr. Jake Chanin was perfect. Everything was, except for learning that Alvin had serious heart disease. I was visibly upset after that and your staff responded - giving me a hug when I was crying and a CNA on the Cardiac floor offering me her own (and last) coffee pod when I was looking for caffeine. Maria in Housekeeping kept us free from worry about bacteria and helped calm and reassure us.

Thanks to James Dillingham, we found Dr. Mark Ammons and his incredible staff. I cannot say enough about him and all his staff, who literally saved Alvin's life, and made us laugh in the process.

For Alvin's second admission on 10/5 for the CABG, the admissions clerk started our day on a high note. Sun and her staff in pre-op were efficient and amazing; taking our minds off the surgery; giving me hugs when Alvin went on his way. The waiting area was comfortable and I was impressed with the information provided to me while Alvin was in surgery. In ICU, the care was incredible - Hannah, Glen, Amanda, Theresa took great care of Alvin and kept me positive. I must mention that I could hear an elderly patient in another room constantly calling out - due to pain or fear. Every time, I heard a staff member responding - patiently and kindly. Once Alvin was moved to CV Care on the same floor, we continued to be impressed. Rebecca N. (RN from Canada) is being nominated for the Daisy Award. But other staff were responsive and their expertise was evident - Tawny (CNA) was there with a smile no matter how often we called; David gave us practical advice about home care; Danielle, Sofia, Becky, Alex all were wonderful; Leslie helped even though Alvin wasn't her patient; Jen removed the tubes so skillfully you wouldn't have known she was in training. I spent a lot of time in the cafeteria - the food was good and the staff were friendly and helpful. MaryAnne, Megan and the rest of the Cardiac Rehab staff helped Alvin stay positive in the hospital and in his continuing outpatient rehab.

I hesitate to even mention the minor things which could be improved, but will so you know that my comments and observations are not biased. A large part of our bill wasn't filed with insurance; we were billed directly. I have sent an e-mail to Billing and have no doubt that it will be corrected quickly and competently. We were asked if Alvin wanted a therapy dog visit. He did, but did not receive one. He requested to receive a visit and communion from a Catholic volunteer but did not. Again, minor issues (except the bill) but just for information.

We believe Alvin could not have received higher quality or more compassionate care anywhere. My apologies to the staff who took care of us when I was too tired or stressed to remember their names. Your work culture and environment must be excellent because we never heard a staff member complain about a job, a coworker, anything. Anytime you are around people for a few hours/days, you almost always hear a little in-fighting, but not in this case. Whatever you're doing to find the perfect staff, please keep it up. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Gloria Koppinger