

Throughout the years, I have frequently been contacted by patients who want me to know how well taken care of they were in one of our Lee Memorial Health System facilities. Sometimes, they approach me in person, and other times, I receive a phone call or an e-mail.

I always appreciate it when a patient takes the time to say, "thank you," and I know all of you do, too. Our devoted caregivers and those of us who support them do not spend our days expecting recognition, but it's always nice to hear.

That is why I wanted to share excerpts from an e-mail that I received from Gloria Tate, who represents District 1 on the Cape Coral City Council. Gloria recently had to make multiple trips to the Weigner-Taeni Center for Emergency Services at Cape Coral Hospital, and she also had to spend a few challenging weeks as a Cape Coral Hospital patient following a procedure. I cried at times as I read her long email, which came only days after she got home.

My tears were tears of appreciation for her praise of the truly caring and compassionate physicians, nurses and staff that she encountered throughout her journey. I felt it was essential to share some comments with you.

During Gloria's first visit to the ED, she says in her e-mail that she arrived at 6:30 p.m. and waited less than 30 minutes to be seen. That is when she met Dr. Robert Tomas. "He genuinely cared about me. He came when he said he would, called me at home, met me at the hospital and, in general, made me feel like he would make sure my care was the best."

Gloria then spent some time on 4 North at CCH. In her e-mail, she specifically thanks several employees, including Monica, Marlene, Georgia, Linda, Nancy and a night-shift Certified Nursing Assistant. (She also apologized for not recalling everyone's name in full!) "When I saw myself in the mirror for the first time [after my procedure], I came apart emotionally, and the nurses of the 4th Floor just picked me up and said I would survive, and I did, thanks to their extraordinary care and compassion," she wrote.

Mike from Food & Nutrition Services also really made an impression on Gloria! She recalls how he was always cheerful and did his best to tempt her to eat something. Gloria also mentioned the wonderful care she received from Debbie Bannigan, who is a Radiology Assistant, and Julia Moretti from Cardiovascular Services, who took the time to thank Gloria for her service as a councilwoman. "I was stunned. Council rarely gets a thank you, much less in that situation," Gloria wrote.

A Transporter named Alan also played a role in the fantastic care Gloria received, as well as a Certified Nursing Assistant on the 3rd Floor (again, she apologizes for not remembering names) and Dr. Christine Mackie, who Gloria referred to as "a caring physician who watched my every move."

This is a very, very condensed version of Mrs. Tate's e-mail. She really put time into her "thank you," trying hard to remember names and to make sure she didn't leave anybody out. I think her ability to remember first names speaks volumes about how our staff never forgets that they are

not treating illnesses, but people. They are working, person-to-person, to provide the best possible care.

While Gloria's message was geared to the care at CCH, I know there are similar stories each and every day and night throughout the health system, from our hospitals to doctors' offices to outpatient centers. Hearing her words of glowing praise helps reinforce the importance of caring and compassion.

I will close this Teaming Update with a few more words from Councilwoman Gloria Tate: "The hospital staff, your people who work here every day, are a gift when we find ourselves in need of healing. What many may call a trying time...angels came from every corner to bring me back."

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jim Nathan
President, Lee Memorial Health System