

# NCH Patient Survives Sudden Heart Attack and Gets Back to Life With Help of Cardiac Rehab Program

December 26, 2017 was just another day at the NCH Briggs Wellness Center until gym member Michael Kirschner, age 73, collapsed and went face down while on the treadmill and was in cardiac arrest.

Two fellow gym members started CPR, but neither was able to get a heartbeat. For all intents and purposes, Kirschner was dead.

“Fortunately, Jordan, an employee, knew where to get and how to use the AED (automated external defibrillator),” said Kirschner. “With two shots, my heartbeat was restored.”



Michael Kirschner

EMS arrived shortly thereafter and transported Kirschner to NCH emergency care, where he was diagnosed with left anterior descending coronary artery

stenosis (LAD). “Doctors scoped it and cleaned it out and gave me a new stent, and a defibrillator was installed in my heart,” he explains.

Kirschner was then put under the care of Dr. Tracey Roth, NCH Heart Institute interventional cardiologist and Dr. Dinesh Sharma, NCH cardiac electrophysiologist. “They were outstanding, as was the nursing staff,” says Kirschner. “I can’t say enough about the excellent care I received in those harrowing days.”

Four or five days after discharge, Kirschner began the NCH Cardiac Rehabilitation Program. For three months (36 sessions), he worked with team members Amy Peleshok, RN; Sue Howlin, RN; Andreas Sigg, EP (exercise physiologist); Natalie Atwood, EP; and Ann Rosenquist, EP.

“I love each and every one,” said Kirschner. “They worked with me and helped me to gain the confidence that I needed to get back on the treadmill.”

As a businessman, Kirschner said he has never seen an operation run better or more smoothly than the NCH Cardiac Rehabilitation Program. “The way this team worked together, not only on my goals but also on those of each patient,” says Kirschner. “They each knew each other’s

responsibilities, and helped each other to help us.”

According to Rosenquist, Kirschner started the cardiac rehab program as a one-on-one. After a medical assessment was performed by a nurse, Rosenquist and Sigg discussed Kirschner’s activity level before his cardiac episode and set goals to get him back to those levels or better. “He was always positive, but hesitant at times,” explains Rosenquist. “But at the end, he exceeded his goals and was in better shape than before the cardiac episode.”

As a three-time cancer survivor – including a brain tumor 11 years ago – Kirschner says he is very thankful these days, and he lives each day with his

life’s motto in mind: “The only happiness you get to keep in your life is the happiness you give away – and it doesn’t always have to be a check.”

He saw a need in the cardiac rehab center and filled it, donating a much-needed large-screen television.

In addition to the exercise program, NCH Cardiac Rehab offers classes on stress management, nutrition, pharmacology and diabetes. A monthly cardiac patient support group and a Phase Three Maintenance Program are also offered at the NCH Cardiac Rehab on Bonita Beach Road, in Bonita Springs.

NCH Cardiac Rehab team members (l to r): Peter Lallone, RRT, Ann Rosenquist, EP, Sue Howlin, RN and Andreas Sigg, EP.



## NCH Cardiac Rehabilitation Services

- Comprehensive Assessments
- Individualized treatment plans coordinated by RNs and Exercise Physiologists
- Continuous monitoring of heart rhythm by wireless telemetry
- Aerobic activity and low intensity strength training tailored to each patient’s individual needs
- Educational classes: Nutrition, Exercise, Medication Management and Stress Reduction
- Progress is communicated to your physician monthly or when there is a significant change

**For more information, contact Peter Lallone, RRT, NCH Manager of Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehab Programs, at (239) 624-6810.**