

Steve Henneberg's Story

My name is Eva Henneberg. On June 25, 1988, Steve and I married. It was a picture perfect Saturday. We were both in our 20s when we exchanged our vows. That was 32 years ago. Practically unheard of nowadays.

Steve was a Diabetic. Three years ago he developed a serious foot infection. July 25, 2017 (exactly one month after our 29th anniversary) he was rushed to the Danbury Hospital Emergency Room. From there he was admitted. Neither of us knew then that we'd never live together again.

For the next three years, until his death, my husband went back and forth between Danbury Hospital and the Western Rehabilitation Care Center. The Care Center is in actuality a nursing home. According to definition the purpose of a nursing home is "to provide the highest level of care outside of a hospital."

All the medical staff at Western Rehabilitation (doctors, nurses & C.N.A.'s) were very familiar with Steve's well documented medical history. The facility's records recorded quite clearly his:

- Quadruple Heart Bypass
- Hospital stays
- Doctor's Appointments
- Type II Diabetes
- Multiple Amputations
- Blood Transfusions
- Medications
- Dialysis

At 61 years of age with a medical history such as his, it was self-evident that EXTREME precautions were necessary to keep Steve Henneberg safe.

Throughout his years of residency at Western Rehab, I did my best to spend time with my husband. In addition to speaking on the phone daily, I'd visit him about four times each week. Whenever his health and the weather permitted, we'd go out in the car for a few hours. When the care center went into lockdown on March 9th, our visits were abruptly cut short. We both understood the medical necessity for this precaution. It meant protection for COVID-19 concerns.

Prior to this Corona Virus, residents had been allowed to socialize off-campus and onsite. They could go freely into the lobby and common rooms. They were even allowed to roam other floors, as well as their own, to visit friends. Lockdown forced them to stay in their rooms. Steve had no roommate. His only physical interactions were with medical staff.

Unable to see Steve at all, I couldn't visually assess how he was doing. On occasion I'd call the Nursing Station to check in and get updates. One Friday and Saturday night Steve and I spoke during our usual evening chat. He sounded odd. The next day I called the Nursing Station myriad times while allowing the phone to ring incessantly. No one ever answered. I was angry but had no recourse. I called the next day, Monday, and actually got to speak with a nurse. I expressed my concerns to her. She told me not to worry because Steve was fine and being monitored closely.

APPARENTLY, THAT WASN'T TRUE! The next day I receive a call telling me he'd been admitted to Danbury Hospital with COVID-19.

Ironically, at the time lockdown began, Steve's Medical Conservator, Social Workers and I had already been doing months of paperwork. It was a to get Steve permanently discharged from Western Rehabilitation so he could once again live at home with necessary help. However, immediately upon lockdown, the facility's doctor stop processing the paperwork. So, he never got his chance to come home.

I did not see my husband for 2 ½ months in an attempt to keep him safe. But that alone wasn't enough. Those who were in close proximity to Steve needed to devote themselves to his safety as well. Clearly they didn't.

As of right now, it's believed that symptoms can take up to fourteen days to manifest, after exposure to COVID-19. The following is based on that.

- MARCH 9th – LOCKDOWN IMPLEMENTED
- APRIL 17th – EARLIEST STEVE COULD HAVE CONTRACTED COVID-19
- MAY 6th – STEVE HOSPITALIZED FOR COVID-19
- MAY 19th – STEVE HENNEBERG DIES OF COVID-19

Steve wasn't allowed contact with anyone other than nursing home staff for six weeks before he contracted COVID. There's only one conclusion that can be drawn – NURSING HOME STAFF BROUGHT THE VIRUS TO HIM!

Rather than enforcing the strictest regulations on nursing homes, our Governor wants to loosen them. During a pandemic is NOT the appropriate time to give medical facilities, "slack." CONVERSELY, THEY NEED TO BE HELD TO EVEN HIGHER STANDARDS!

We entrusted the Western Rehabilitation Care Center to improve Steve's health or AT THE VERY LEAST, TO KEEP HIM SAFE! As far as I'm concerned, his having contracted this Coronavirus killer, while in the care of Western Rehab, is akin to involuntary manslaughter.

Rather than celebrating our 32nd wedding anniversary on June 25th of this year, I spent the day working with a Funeral Director. We made arrangements with regard to my husbands remains.

Steve and I won't have the chance to retire together. No, "Golden Years." This scenario was not only unnecessary – IT'S UNNACCEPTABLE!

Until we can eradicate this invisible killer we must do the next best thing – we must deny it human hosts. WEAR MASKS! WASH HANDS WELL AND OFTEN! SEPARATE HIGH RISK INDIVIDUALS FROM ALL OTHERS! It's only common sense. Extreme preventative measures are the only weapons in our arsenal. They may take up more time and money to employ. But saving human lives are far more valuable.

Please allow Steve Henneberg's death to help prevent others from dying. I thank you very much for your consideration. Stay safe and be well.

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