



LAKESHORE LINK

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An array of serious ailments lands Ken Blackburn in the ER of the Lakeshore General Hospital

If you don't treat this man within five minutes, you may as well call the coroner," Ken Blackburn's friend breathlessly told a startled receptionist at a West Island walk-in clinic. The healthcare team rushed to Ken's side. Slumped over in a chair, the 71-year-old was turning blue and was delirious. An ambulance whisked him to the ER at the Lakeshore General Hospital.

The diagnosis: chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) coupled with a heart attack and ulcerated colitis. Ken was in rough shape. He would be admitted to the intensive care unit and then to a hospital ward where he'd undergo a battery of tests. He'd spend the next 20 days in hospital. It was January 2011.

Thus started Ken's long-term relationship with the Lakeshore General Hospital. "I've been in and out of the hospital on numerous occasions and been seen in virtually every department," he says. "The care has been superb. Everyone—the nurses, nurses' aids, orderlies, doctors—absolutely everyone has gone above and beyond to help me. I only have good things to say."

In fact, Ken has become so familiar with the staff he occasionally dispenses his own medical advice. "One of my doctors always walked so quickly," he recalls, "so one time when she stopped by to see me, I told her I had a prescription for her. Once at home, I instructed her to have a glass of wine and put her feet up. She laughed, assuring me she'd heed my advice." Upon learning Ken was being discharged, that same doctor helped him pack and sent him home with a hug and a kiss.



Mr. Ken Blackburn

A lifelong smoker, Ken quit cold turkey after his initial hospitalization. Unfortunately, the damage was irreversible. He'll have to cope with COPD for the rest of his life, and to aid his breathing he has to wheel around an oxygen concentrator. But Ken counts himself lucky, noting a lot of people are worse off than he.

To show his appreciation for the exceptional care he received and continues to receive, Ken makes an annual donation to the Lakeshore General Hospital Foundation.

"West Islanders are very lucky to have such an excellent hospital so close to home. We need to support the Foundation to make the hospital even better, which benefits everyone," he says. "I tell everyone, if ever they need medical help, they should go to the Lakeshore General Hospital. It is the best care they'll get." •

