

**TO MEDIA:**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**QUICK THINKING AND PERSISTENCE TURN CARDIAC EMERGENCY INTO CHRISTMAS MIRACLE FOR EXCELA HEALTH PATIENT**

***Gratitude for life-saving response spurs advocacy for heart health***

**GREENSBURG, PA, February 2023** ... What a difference a day makes. One day Jerry Capo is trekking through Disney World with his family; the next he's lying on the bathroom floor of his Greensburg home receiving cardiopulmonary resuscitation from his wife, Heather, and Mutual Aid Ambulance Service first responders. Before his medical emergency is over, Capo will experience a major heart attack, be shocked 16 times to restore a normal heart rhythm and receive two stents.

That was December 20. Just eight weeks later, the 47-year-old metallurgical engineer is heading back to work, a fitting testimony to rapid response and multidisciplinary teamwork during the February observance of National Heart Month.

Excelsa Health interventional cardiologist Nevin Baker, DO, FACC, FSCAI, who was on duty in the Heart Center cardiac catheterization lab at Excelsa Westmoreland Hospital, had many reasons to be pessimistic about Capo's outcome, given all that had transpired prior to stent placement: sudden cardiac arrest, major myocardial infarction, repeated resuscitative shock, and severely reduced heart function all pointed to a single-digit survival rate.

But Capo defied the odds, and although he has no memory of his last day at Disney or the 72-hour period that followed, he has no cognitive impairment or heart muscle damage.

Beyond a short recovery stay in the cardiac intensive care unit at Excelsa Westmoreland and a brief stint at Excelsa Latrobe Hospital receiving physical, occupational and speech therapy in EPIC Rehab, Capo is now finishing up several sessions of cardiac rehabilitation at Excelsa Frick Hospital as he resumes his normal routine.

Dr. Baker was gratified to greet Capo during the January office follow-up visit. When the two shook hands, they were overcome with emotion, as they both realized this Christmas story could have had a different ending.

Although there was no history of heart disease in Capo's immediate family, Dr. Baker believes the cardiac event was largely genetic, given that more distant relatives died in their mid-40s and 50s. Capo vows not to let that happen to others in his family, and has already inspired an uncle to seek cardiac care, and will pursue appropriate testing for his son when he's old enough.

"I am indeed humbled by all that has happened," Capo said. "The care I received was top-notch, with the right people in the right place at the right time. I thank God for everyone's knowledge, starting with my wife, who's a nurse in the Student Health Center at St. Vincent College. If she hadn't remained calm and started CPR, things would be much different today, I'm sure of it."

To learn more search heart at [www.excelahealth.org](http://www.excelahealth.org).