

## **Script – Print – Patient celebrates second chance at life**

Mark Pohl never gets sick. That's why when he suffered a massive heart attack last year he went into a funk.

"I was depressed and kept thinking, 'Why me?' It was an emotional roller coaster."

But Pohl survived that turbulent time, and thanks to excellent care from his medical team at OSF HealthCare and life-saving technology, he's getting a second chance at life.

Pohl was honored April 25 during a special luncheon hosted by OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center and Abiomed, Inc., at OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford.

A Navy veteran, Pohl was marching in a parade for the VFW in August of 2022, when he began to feel ill and went home. Later, he became unresponsive and his wife, Melody, called 911. Paramedics arrived and performed CPR before rushing Pohl to OSF Saint Paul Medical Center in Mendota. He was then transferred to OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford.

"I really don't remember much," Pohl says. "Four days later, I woke up at OSF."

Pohl's medical team determined his left anterior descending artery (nicknamed the widowmaker) was 100% blocked. A stent was placed but Pohl needed additional CPR. Once he was stabilized, Dr. Samer Mowakeaa, an interventional cardiologist with OSF Cardiovascular Institute, implanted an Impella CP to allow Pohl's heart to rest.

"He would not have survived without the support of these technologies that we used," says Dr. Mowakeaa. "This was a life-threatening condition."

Developed and manufactured by Abiomed, Impella heart pumps allow the heart to rest and recover by temporarily assisting the pumping function of the heart to efficiently deliver blood and oxygen to the entire body. The Impella has been helping patients in the United States since 2008.

Additional testing revealed that Pohl was also experiencing right heart failure, so Dr. Mowakeaa implanted an Impella RP to provide biventricular support. Two days later, Pohl's heart function began to improve and eventually the Impella RP and Impella CP were removed.

Pohl spent 11 days in the hospital before he was released. He has returned to work where he manages an office supply company. He also works out several times a week and enjoys spending time with his children and grandchildren.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in men in the United States. Dr. Mowakeaa says situation's like Pohl's should serve as a wakeup call to others.

And Pohl agrees, saying there's a lesson in the journey he's traveled. "Don't give up. Grab the bull by the horn as they say and plow through it."