

# **St. Jacob COVID-19/Diabetic Patient Ramirez And Provider Urge Strong Caution To Others**

by Lori Harlan  
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ST. JACOB - Even after recovery, fear of the unknown troubles patients with COVID-19, as long-term effects of the disease remain to be determined.

“We keep an eye on lung function after patients are discharged from the hospital,” said Steven Taylor, MD, FAAFP, a family medicine physician at HSHS Medical Group Family Medicine – O’Fallon. “We’re looking for lung scarring and other chronic systemic effects of the disease process that are still unknown.”

Jose Ramirez, a 41-year-old account from St. Jacob, said he was treating his COVID-19 at home when he developed diabetic ketoacidosis that landed him in the hospital, which he considers a blessing.

Diabetes, hypertension and other chronic conditions put patients at higher risk of complications.

“I would’ve just stayed at home in bed trying to fight it off. I was isolating and resting, taking Tylenol and trying to hydrate,” Ramirez said.

After being hospitalized for four days, his oxygen levels dropped, and breathing became more difficult. Simple things like turning over in bed or walking to the restroom made him short of breath.

“Even with the help of an inhaler and oxygen, I still had trouble catching my breath,” Ramirez said. “It was a horrible feeling.”

Doctors at HSHS St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in O’Fallon determined Ramirez was a viable candidate for the experimental drug, Remdesivir. He agreed because he knew his condition was worsening.

Within a few days he was feeling better and was eventually released from the hospital.

His message is clear: Don’t let your guard down.

“We were careful with handwashing. My family was taking precautions. I just dropped my guard at a family gathering,” Ramirez said. “I’m glad businesses are mandating masks. I don’t want to go through this again or for others to have similar experiences.”

Dr. Taylor, who assessed Ramirez after he was discharged from the hospital, agrees.

“This is not a disease to be taken lightly. It’s real, and it’s all around us,” Taylor said. “We expect cases to climb. In the coming weeks with further openings in the state, we need to wear masks and socially distance and take this seriously.”

## **About HSHS Medical Group**

HSHS Medical Group is the physician organization of Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS). Launched in 2009, HSHS Medical Group is a critical component of the HSHS Care Integration strategy, which focuses on bringing physicians, technology and patients together to improve the overall health of our communities. Today, HSHS Medical

Group is comprised of over 1,300 colleagues in locations throughout Central and Southern Illinois. HSHS Medical Group is powered by the Franciscan history of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, and our faith-based identity led us to the single most important tenet of the HSHS Medical Group philosophy — patient-first care. For more information about HSHS Medical Group, visit [HSHSMedicalGroup.org](http://HSHSMedicalGroup.org).

## **About Hospital Sisters Health System**

Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people through our high quality, Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our 14 Local Systems and physician practices in Illinois (Belleville, Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and Hospital Sisters of St. Francis is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit [www.hshs.org](http://www.hshs.org). For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit [www.hospitalsisters.org](http://www.hospitalsisters.org).