

Sharon Warren could barely move or even swallow food when she arrived at Van Matre Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital in Rockford. Though she had beaten COVID-19, her journey was not over.

Van Matre's healthcare heroes leapt into action to help Sharon recover from the virus, which had progressed to double pneumonia. "The doctor said I'll keep her alive as long as I can," recalled her husband James Warren, who also contracted COVID-19 but recuperated faster.

The severity of Sharon's case demanded physical therapy. Four weeks in the hospital, two weeks on a ventilator and one week in a coma had taken their toll.

Stephen Talty, MD, Van Matre's medical director, said many people don't realize COVID-19 patients can suffer:

- Multi-organ failure
- Loss of weight and muscle mass
- Decreased strength and endurance

The experts at Van Matre helped get Sharon back on her feet in one week, as they have done for so many other rehabilitation patients since 2001.

"It's rewarding," Dr. Talty said. "[At first] it takes three people to get them into a chair, and then you see them step into a car to go home. This is what we come to work for everyday."

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