

Press Release

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“Code Cool” saves life of Cardiac Arrest patient

Birthday event Wednesday at Ellis for the hospital's first cooling therapy patient

Schenectady, N.Y: John Mazur of Guilderland will be hitting the “big 5-0” this week – a true cause for celebration after experts at Ellis saved his life by cooling him down with a unique technique following his cardiac arrest.

On October 14, Mazur was the **first patient** to receive Hypothermic Therapy treatment at Ellis, just days after the hospital initiated it's “Code Cool” protocols – the culmination of more than a year of research, review and training by a multi-disciplinary team.

Hypothermic Therapy is a process used to rapidly lower the body temperature to a near-hypothermic state in order to prevent or reduce brain damage in a cardiac arrest patient.

After cardiac arrest, when the heart is restarted and blood flow returns to the brain, cells in the brain can be damaged due to certain chemical reactions. “Before the use of therapeutic hypothermia, 60% or more of patients who survived the initial cardiac event had significant brain damage. Studies have shown that cooling the brain following restoration of blood flow, which decreases the oxygen requirements of the brain during this critical period, can increase the chances of a favorable outcome by 30% to 50%,” said Brian McDonald, M.D., Medical Director, Intensive Care Unit at Ellis Hospital.

Mazur was “cooled” at Ellis Hospital with a chilled saline IV, ice packs and a cooling blanket for 24 hours, reducing his body temperature to approximately 91.4 degrees Fahrenheit. The process is closely monitored by a specially – trained “Code Cool” team from across the hospital, including physicians, nurses and patient care technicians from the Emergency Department, Critical Care, Cardiology, Neurology and Respiratory Therapy. The re-warming process is slow and gradual – a half a degree at a time—as the body temperature is raised approximately 7 degrees.

Mazur collapsed from cardiac arrest while pumping gas after his regular workout at the gym on October 14. EMTs started CPR and the Ellis Emergency Department staff

continued efforts to restart his heart – 45 minutes in all. Experts at Ellis say Mazur had a high risk of dying or suffering severe brain damage as a result of being unconscious for so long.

“They never gave up on me,” said Mazur. “I guess you could say my life was measured by degrees for a while.”

“As soon as we got the heads up from our EMS partners in the field, we knew that Hypothermic Therapy could help save John’s life. We had planned and trained hard for this day – the whole team was ready to save a life with a new technique,” commented Roger Barrowman, MD, Chairman of Emergency Services at Ellis Medicine.

After two weeks in the hospital, Mazur has recovered with no apparent neurological consequences. He’s back at work and back to his life with his wife and two teenage daughters, busy with holiday shopping and making plans to see a Buffalo Bills game with his buddies for his birthday. And, he has a new nickname, one that he gratefully and graciously accepts. “My wife calls me ‘Mr. Freeze’,” said Mazur.

“Everything I do, every day, means more to me now that I’ve been given a second chance at life. I owe my life and my terrific outcome to the Code Cool team at Ellis. I know that I’m a very lucky man and that God was watching over me,” said Mazur. Mazur has reached out to the American Heart Association to support their efforts.