

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Louisville surgeons say second AbioCor patient improving**

(LOUISVILLE) – University of Louisville surgeons reported today that Tom Christerson moved out of the Rudd Heart and Lung Intensive Care Recovery area. Mr. Christerson will now stay in a “step-down” or telemetry monitoring unit for cardiac patients at Jewish Hospital.

On Wednesday, Mr. Christerson also went on an excursion outside the hospital. Accompanied by his wife, Ouida “Speedy” Christerson, Mr. Christerson took a van tour of downtown Louisville.

Dr. Laman Gray and Dr. Rob Dowling reported that Mr. Christerson is gaining strength and progressing well in physical therapy. He’s been breathing without ventilator assistance and his temperature has been normal for the past several weeks. Mr. Christerson underwent surgery on September 13 at Jewish Hospital to implant the AbioCor totally implantable artificial heart – the second in the world.

“Tom is making steady progress,” said Dr. Dowling. “Each day, I see some improvement in his condition.”

“He is still very weak, but Tom is making continuous strides in his physical therapy,” added Dr. Gray. “He usually takes a few steps every day with the help of a walker.”

Although Mr. Christerson no longer needs a ventilator to help him breathe, he continues to have trouble swallowing. Because of that, he has a tracheotomy to prevent aspiration, which can be caused by secretions collecting in his lungs.

The move to a less intensive care unit indicates a significant gain for Mr. Christerson, but Dr. Gray and Dr. Dowling say Mr. Christerson is still weak from a pre-existing lung

disease, known as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. At this time, the physicians are not speculating on a release date for Mr. Christerson, although he is taking short trips around the medical campus.

Jewish Hospital and Drs. Gray and Dowling will continue the practice of not giving daily updates on Mr. Christerson's condition. More information will be made available as appropriate.

Jewish Hospital is among the top ten cardiac centers in the United States and, along with the University of Louisville, is dedicated to excellence, research and education. University of Louisville surgeons at Jewish Hospital have performed many heart care "firsts," including Kentucky's first heart transplant, the world's first heart transplant following the use of a Thoratec bi-ventricular assist device, the world's first endoscopic saphenous vein harvest and the first ventricular remodeling in the region.

For more information, please visit [www.heartpioneers.com](http://www.heartpioneers.com).