



Guam Memorial Hospital Authority

Aturidåt Espetåt Mimuriåt Guåhan

850 Governor Carlos G. Camacho Road

Tamuning, Guam 96913

Tel.: (671) 647-2552 or 2330 | Fax: (671) 649-0145



Press Release

(For Immediate Release)

Premature Infant Released After Nine Months in the NICU

(Tuesday, February 28, 2022; Tamuning, Guam) On Friday, February 10, 2023, little Markes Shirai was released from the Guam Memorial Hospital Authority (GMHA) neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) after 275 days. The infant was born premature and weighed a mere 740 grams or 1.6 lbs. Throughout his stay, Baby Markes has been a little warrior who fought to survive every day.

Markes was born at 25 weeks of gestation. Infants born this young have a good chance of survival if they receive intensive care immediately. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Health, the survival rate of premature babies is approximately 78.3%.

Babies born this early can develop different health issues like problems breathing as their lungs are still developing at 25 weeks. Before his release, baby Markes had failed the room air challenge (RAC) three times. The RAC makes sure an infant's oxygen levels stay at an acceptable level when the nasal cannula providing oxygen is removed and they are breathing on their own.

Failing the RAC meant Markes would require an at-home oxygen machine in order to be released. These machines are in high demand in Guam and can be difficult to secure. Two GMHA pediatricians purchased and donated an O2 concentrator to the Shirai family so Markes could finally go home.

"I am very appreciative and have great respect for our NICU nurses and pediatricians for the exemplary care they provide to our smallest patients and especially to preemies like little Markes so he could grow and thrive," said Lillian Perez-Posadas, Hospital Administrator/CEO, "It is a privilege to care for our people at any age, but there is an extra joy that comes from saving the life of an infant who came into the world earlier than expected and is finally able to go home."

GMHA would like to recognize our NICU/OB-GYN nurses who worked compassionately and diligently caring for Markes around the clock until he was stable and strong enough to go home. We would also like to recognize and thank our pediatricians who in their benevolence and thoughtfulness went above and beyond for the tiny infant who is now a flourishing, happy baby. The day his parents took Markes home, he weighed a healthy 17.6 lbs.

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For more information, please contact:

Cindy Hanson
Public Information Officer
E: communications@gmha.org