UAB MEDICINE

From ICU to the Ballpark: An ECMO Survivor Reunion to Promote Staff Resilience and Engagement

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BACKGROUND / PURPOSE

Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) provides life-sustaining support for some of the most critically ill patients with heart or lung failure. Survival to hospital discharge remains 45–60% for all therapy indications. ECMO team members often care for patients without seeing their long-term recovery. This event is aimed to improved staff morale by reconnecting healthcare providers, survivors, and families to celebrate ECMO All Stars survivorship and resilience.

METHODS / IMPLEMENTATION

The event provided a relaxed, community-based setting where survivors, families and healthcare team members could connect and celebrate recovery. Former ECMO survivors receiving follow-up care at UAB and their families were invited to a Birmingham Barons baseball game. Invitations for staff included the multidisciplinary team: ICU nurses, physicians, surgeons, perfusionists, ECMO specialists, respiratory therapists, ED personnel, cath lab staff, pharmacy, and PT, OT, and speech therapy teams.

RESULTS / OUTCOMES

- An inaugural event was established in May of 2025 with over 125participants.
- More than 170 survivors, families, and healthcare professionals attended the 2nd annual event in May 2026.
- Survivors expressed gratitude directly to clinicians for the care they received.
- Staff described renewed motivation and a greater sense of purpose by interacting with survivors and families they directly cared for.



Patients ↔ Families ↔ Care teams

ECMO SURVIVOR CONNECTION

DISCUSSION

This event created meaningful opportunities for healthcare providers to be recognized as well as reflect on the role and impact in patients lives. The reunion also fostered peer connections among survivors with shared, life-changing experiences.

CONCLUSION

Although outcomes were not formally measured, participants described increased pride, appreciation, and professional fulfillment. Survivorship-focused engagement can strengthen care team morale and resilience.

CELEBRATING STRENGTH & RESILIENCE
ECMO ALL-STARS
REGIONS FIELD
5.17.25

IMPACT

170+
attendees

2
annual events

9+
disciplines invited

1
shared mission

Renewing purpose by reuniting staff with former ECMO patients promoting resilience and improving morale.