

Everyone Has a Story

By Norman M. Goldfarb

Everyone has a story. At this point, I would normally tell a patient's heartwarming story, but the following (paraphrased) story by an Uber driver is just too good:

Two years ago, I was the front-desk manager at a large hotel in Orlando, Florida. Early one Saturday morning, one of our staff called me over to help with an unusual request. A middle-aged gentleman in a suit explained that he was a member at the highest level of our elite guest program. He needed a room for 24 hours to store something. And, he wanted the room for free. Our hotel does not give out free rooms, especially in the busy summer season, but we would be happy to store the item in our safe, freezer or other suitable place in the hotel.

The gentleman then admitted that he needed the room to store a baby giraffe. After confirming that the gentleman was serious and that it was an actual, live giraffe, I explained that our hotel could not accept responsibility for his giraffe unless he could provide documentation that it was a service animal — a service giraffe — and he was staying at the hotel with it. The gentleman could not even produce documentation that he owned the giraffe — were we dealing with a "hot" giraffe?

I then discovered that the seven-foot giraffe was in a van at the front entrance, creating quite a stir. After we explored various options at length, the gentleman departed the hotel to try his luck elsewhere.

Eligibility criteria ensure some uniformity of study participants. However, investigators and study coordinators know that every patient is a real person with a unique story. While that story is unlikely to include a baby giraffe, we all need to remember that study participants are real people, each with their own story.

Author

Norman M. Goldfarb is Managing Director of First Clinical Research LLC, a provider of clinical research best practices information services. Contact him at 1.650.465.0119 or ngoldfarb@firstclinical.com.