



# KELOWNA PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT & AWARENESS GROUP

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## MERRY CHRISTMAS

**Y**vonne and I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a **Very Merry Christmas and the very best in 2023**. We hope that you will be able to spend time with family and friends this year. This may be the first Christmas in a couple of years that many families will be able to get together for Christmas.

We hope that everyone receiving this newsletter is finding it interesting and informative, if anyone has ideas or suggestions for information you would like to see in future newsletters, please let me know and I will try my best to put the suggested information in an up coming newsletter, remembering that we don't diagnose, treat, or tell anyone what treatment someone should have.

If anyone wishes to have their name and contact information removed from this contact list, please let me know and I will remove your contact information.

If anyone has any questions or concerns that I may be able with, please feel free to contact me at the above phone number.

### How I Coped with My Own Cancer Diagnoses as an Oncologist

The following is an excerpt of an article that appeared in the Male Care Prostate Cancer Newsletter Oct. 2022, by *Dr. Arthur D. Hamberger, MD, FACR*.

**G**rowing up in New York City housing projects, I dreamed of becoming a physician one day, but I never thought about specifically providing care to people with cancer. After graduating from medical school, I completed an internship and residency program in internal medicine. This is the moment when an unexpected life event would change the direction of my career – and life.

## **How my first cancer diagnosis led me to becoming an oncologist**

I was diagnosed with **testicular cancer** near the end of my first year of residency. At the time, I was 25 years old with a young wife and a 5-month-old daughter. I was faced with a scary diagnosis, an immediate surgery, and then 4 weeks of postoperative radiation therapy. While receiving treatment, I became interested in radiation therapy and decided to shift gears in my career and became a radiation oncologist. After gaining board certification in internal medicine, I then began a 3-year fellowship program at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

I worked at MD Anderson, until 1982 as a tenured professor of radiation oncology and director of the radiotherapy training program until I was recruited to direct a new radiotherapy department at Memorial City General Hospital in Houston. As hard as it was to leave MD Anderson, I looked forward to the challenge of running my own department.

## **Receiving multiple cancer diagnoses 45 years later**

As I prepared for retirement, I spent 3 years working part-time. During that time, I was diagnosed with **prostate cancer**. It had been 46 years since my first cancer diagnosis. Because my uncle and my brother were diagnosed with prostate cancer, I decided to have a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test beyond the age of 70, which is the age at which routine screening is no

longer recommended. The test came back minimally elevated. I then took a Prostate Health Index test that indicated a 10% likelihood I had a serious cancer, and I chose to proceed with further testing. While my magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan showed only 1 suspicious area on my prostate, my biopsies revealed there were actually 3 areas involved. Having previously received radiation therapy for testicular cancer, I wanted to avoid having radiation therapy a second time because of the high risk of injury if the same area was treated with radiation again. I elected to have a robotic prostatectomy to remove my prostate in March 2017.

I made an excellent recovery from the prostatectomy. But while the tests on my lymph nodes came back negative for prostate cancer, they looked abnormal under the microscope. It was determined that I had a type of **lymphoma** identical to **chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL)** that wouldn't have been detected if I hadn't had prostate surgery. Doctors determined that my lymphoma did not require treatment at that time, just close monitoring.

Then just before Thanksgiving 2018, I noticed the faintest tinge of blood in my urine. A computed tomography (CT) scan revealed a **bladder tumor**. Surgery successfully removed the cancer, but the CT scan had also uncovered a mass in my pancreas. A biopsy showed it was **pancreatic cancer**. It was my fourth cancer in less than 2 years. I had robotic surgery to remove half of my pancreas and my

spleen. After surgery, I received chemotherapy for 6 months.

I tolerated treatment well, and I continued to have routine follow-ups for all my cancers until a CT scan in August 2021 showed a small tumor in my right kidney, which in retrospect had been there for a few years. There is a 60% chance it could be cancer. Thankfully, the tumor hasn't grown further, so it is being monitored now.

My cancer journey has led me to find my calling: helping other people with cancer cope with their diagnosis and the side effects of treatment by staying strong and keep a positive attitude.

#### **My advice for coping with a cancer diagnosis**

Knowing what to expect and finding ways to cope with the *stress*, *anxiety* and *uncertainty* that come with a cancer diagnosis is an important step in the cancer journey. My advice to other people with cancer is.

1. Try not to let your illness overwhelm you.
2. Look to the positives in your life and continue to live life to the fullest.
3. Consider how much you want to know about your cancer. Do you like all the facts and details, or do you just want to know the basics.
4. Maintain open and honest communication with your loved ones and doctors after your cancer diagnosis

5. Prepare yourself in advance for the possible side effects that may occur during treatment.
6. Maintain a healthy lifestyle. Eat right, get rest, practice relaxation and meditation techniques, and exercise as much as you can tolerate without exhausting yourself. This benefitted me before, during and after treatment.
7. Let people help you. Not only will it benefit you, but it also gives the people who care about you the sense of making a contribution during a difficult time.
8. Try to maintain a sense of normality while also taking things one day at a time.
9. Find a support group. Talking to other people with cancer can be a freeing and validating experience.

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#### **WITT'S WIT (ON THE LIGHTER SIDE) -**

##### **How Children Perceive Their Grandparents**

When my Grandson Billy and I entered our vacation cabin, we kept the lights off until we were inside to keep from attracting pesky insects. Still, a few fireflies followed us in. Noticing them before I did, Billy whispered, "It's no use Grandpa. Now the mosquitoes are coming after us with flashlights."

## Update on ESSA Pharma's Drug EPI-7386 in Combination with Enzalutamide -

The following is a very brief excerpt of information obtained in late October from ESSA Pharma's website and is the latest update on EPI-7386 when used in combination with Enzalutamide. Essa Pharma. is a Vancouver based company with offices also located in the U.S.

Essa Pharma is a clinical-stage pharmaceutical company focused on developing novel therapies for the treatment of prostate cancer. In late October the company presented updated clinical data from the first two cohorts of the Phase 1/2 study of ESSA's lead candidate EPI-7386 in combination with enzalutamide in patients with metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC).

EPI-7386 in combination with enzalutamide was safe and well-tolerated at the doses tested with clinically relevant drug exposures and deep and durable prostate-specific antigen (PSA) reductions observed in five of six patients.

"We are encouraged by the rapid and deep PSA responses observed in the dose escalation study of EPI-7386 in combination with enzalutamide," stated Dr. David Parkinson, M.D., President and CEO of ESSA. "The therapies continue to be safe and well-tolerated, and pharmacokinetic results demonstrate enzalutamide exposure was minimally impacted by EPI-7386 as expected. We are currently enrolling a third dose escalation cohort as we optimize the therapeutic dose of EPI-7386 in the combination study in preparation for phase 2"

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness group does not recommend treatment modalities or physicians: However, all information is fully shared and is confidential. The information contained in this newsletter is not intended to replace the services of your health professionals regarding matters of your personal health.

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness Group would like to thank Janssen - and TerSera for their support and educational grants that go towards our newsletters and our support group.



### UP COMING MEETING DATES FOR 2023 -

**Jan.14 - Feb. 11 – March 11 – April 8 – May 13 - June 10**

### Meeting Location:

Our meetings take place in the Harvest Room at Trinity Church located at the corner of Springfield Road and Spall Road. Please enter through the South Entrance off the main parking lot and follow the signs upstairs to the Harvest Room. Our meetings begin at 9:00 A.M. and the doors open at 8:30 A.M. There is elevator access if needed.

**NOTE:** Many of our past newsletters are available for viewing and printing through our website. – [www.kelownaprostate.com](http://www.kelownaprostate.com)

- A big *Thank You to Doris at Affordable Web Design for all her work on our website.*