

Resister Spotlight - Dave's Story

Hello my name is Dave Nitsche,

5 years ago I started to lose sight in my left eye. I would look at a telephone pole and it was wavy. I went to the optometrist and he told me to make an appointment in the next few days but if it got worse to come back right away. After two days I lost my sight which they thought was a detached retina. After many appointments to the doctors and the eye pressure going thru the roof they finally drained the fluid behind the eye. The next day it was back and it was decided that the eye should be removed as there was no chance of regaining sight in it anyway. During this whole time I felt fine and was still running and cycling lots. After the eye removal I thought that was it, then they sent me for a bone scan and 2 weeks later to a lung specialist who drained about a litre out of my left lung. She told me the results would take about a week. There was no mention of the word cancer....yet. I got a call the next day and she said I better come in. It was cancer in my lung that had gone to my eye. I was sent to an oncologist the next day to start treatment. At that meeting I was told I had 4th stage EGFR Exon 19 and that I would be on targeted treatment for however long I lasted. It was inoperable and chemo and radiation was not an option. As such I was prescribed Afatinib and that lasted about 3 months then it went to my brain. I was switched over to Tagrisso (osimertinib) to cross the blood brain barrier. That worked!!! I did have one met go to my brain in 2023 and had targeted radiation on that spot and it was taken care of. Although I did experience focal seizures after but they are being taken care of with yet another pill! Since then all has been stable and that seems the best I can hope for.

During the last 5 years a lot has happened and I try to take it all in stride. I still ride my bike both road, mountain and gravel and we still hike a lot in the Rockies most every weekend. My advocacy work with such organizations such as Man up to Cancer, The White Ribbon project, Astra Zeneca and Wellspring along with other various Facebook groups keeps me busy. It is hard some days to watch people I know pass from this knowing that at anytime mine could progress to that point, but on the other hand I see great advancements in the cancer field which gives me hope.

I truly believe sharing our stories and advocating for ourselves and others is extremely important. Also to stay as physically fit as we possibly can. If that means taking your dog for a walk each day (they won't ever say no), or just making a list of daily accomplishments you would like to get done.

There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about cancer (all those daily pills help with that) but there is never a day that goes by that I don't have goals or aspirations to do more while I can. I hope you can do that as well.