



GOLD STANDARD CANCER TREATMENT, ADVANCED SURGICAL TECHNIQUES KEEP ACTIVE DAD MOVING

Getting Back into the Swing of Things

AFTER COLORECTAL CANCER TREATMENT

Sometimes hearing you have cancer leaves you feeling like you've been hit in the gut with a fistful of uncertainty. "I was blindsided by my diagnosis," said Jay Halferty, who, at 48, learned he had Stage III colorectal cancer. It hasn't been an easy journey, but Jay responded well to the nationally recognized standard for treatment provided by the cancer experts at Abington's Rosenfeld Cancer Center.

Diagnosed with colorectal cancer in April 2015, Jay sought a treatment consultation at Abington, as well as at two other major regional cancer centers. "The treatment protocol was the same at all three places," said Jay, a Blue Bell resident, who co-owns an electrical inspections and underwriting business. "I chose Abington because it was close to home and I really trust the doctors here. Being comfortable with my doctors is very important to me."

The Best of Both Worlds: Expert Cancer Care, Close to Home

Jay's physicians, Oncologist Mark Sundermeyer, MD and Surgeon Steven Fassler, MD, chief, Colon and Rectal Surgery, AH, guided him through a treatment plan that involved pre-surgical radiation and chemotherapy, followed by surgery, then another regimen of chemotherapy. Working closely with Jay and his doctors was the team nurse navigator for colorectal cancer – Kelly Pressler, RN.

From diagnostic testing through physician consults, education, treatment and follow-up care, nurse navigators support patients throughout the continuum of care. "When you're first diagnosed, you don't know where to go or where to turn," said Jay. "Kelly was especially helpful to me at the start. She mapped out the whole treatment plan for me."

Jay was fortunate to benefit from the advanced knowledge, technological capabilities and skill of Abington's medical and surgical oncology team. "A unique component of cancer care at Abington is our multidisciplinary review of each patient's case," explained Dr. Fassler. Abington's team of specialists from various disciplines meets routinely to share expertise for each case. Together, they review diagnostic studies and discuss treatment recommendations for a customized treatment plan for each patient.

Patients also benefit from the collaboration with the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson, an NCI-designated center.

Additionally, patients like Jay benefit from Abington's participation in the consortium for the National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer. "This group is comprised of healthcare institutions that have come together with the purpose of improving the quality of rectal cancer care in the U.S. through advocacy, education and research," said Dr. Fassler.

"Abington's team approach was so important to me," said Jay. "You've got to get the right docs with expertise, who can work together. I also found an intensely personalized experience."

Jay also embraced another component of Abington's comprehensive cancer care through the Center for Clinical Research, which offers patients opportunities to participate in nationally recognized clinical trials. Through these studies, investigators hope to find and prove the effectiveness of new treatments for cancer.

Jay joined a clinical trial designed to help researchers learn whether or not chemotherapy alone in patients who must undergo surgery for rectal cancer, will be as effective as the current standard treatment, which combines chemotherapy with radiation. "Abington Hospital is among the highest-accruing institutions in the nation for this study," said Dr. Fassler.



"Abington's team approach was so important to me. You've got to get the right docs with expertise, who can work together. I also found an intensely personalized experience."

JAY HALFERTY

Getting Back to the Old Routine with a New Outlook on Life

After reviewing Jay's surgical options, Abington's specialists recommended a minimally invasive, robotic-assisted procedure, in which Dr. Fassler has received advanced training. To perform Jay's colectomy (surgical removal of the cancerous portion of the colon), Dr. Fassler used a surgical robot to assist in operating with specialized instruments through several tiny incisions in the abdomen. In comparison to open surgery, which requires a large incision, the minimally invasive procedure results in less scarring and pain and a shorter recovery period.

Just two weeks after surgery, Jay played a round of golf. He kept swinging through several months of chemotherapy. "I've been able to do most things I could before I had the surgery," said Jay. Being able to stay active and attending his kids' sporting events helped to keep Jay motivated throughout three additional months of follow-up chemotherapy. Today he is cancer-free. "I'm thankful and so happy to be back to the normal stuff. You don't realize how great your daily routine is until it's taken away from you. Normal is great."

For more information about our staff and services, visit our website, Jefferson.edu/AbingtonCancer or call 1-800-405-HELP.

SCHEDULE A COLONOSCOPY SCREENING TODAY!

Colorectal cancer is highly curable if detected early. Have your first screening at age 40 if you have a family history of colon cancer; age 45 if you're African American, or age 50 otherwise.

Schedule today by calling 215-481-MEDI (6334).



FACT: 7 OF 10 PEOPLE WITH COLON CANCER HAVE NO SYMPTOMS.



ABINGTON HEALTH FOUNDATION HAS LAUNCHED A REIMAGINE CANCER CARE CAMPAIGN

to support construction of the new Asplundh Cancer Pavilion on our Willow Grove Campus. The community has been very generous to this exciting project that will transform the way cancer care is delivered at Abington – Jefferson Health. Please visit abingtonhealth.org/campaign, or call 215-481-GIFT for more information.

