

Survivor Stories: Annette's Lessons

The Financial Side of Oncogenomics

I guess the big thing for that was funding because, you need to get four doses and the extra dose was not paid for. Each extra dose was \$45,000. So I needed to get close to \$200,000 worth of medication paid for. Whatever. We would have done-- I mean, you do it right? Like we'd have mortgaged our house or whatever. We would have figured it out. We were lucky enough that we could have mortgaged our house and we could have figured out how to pay for it and we would of. There's a medication nurse at that clinic in North Van. The only one. There's none here. Even our oncologist is like, I don't know who she is or why she's there. I'm like, I don't know, but thank goodness she is . I guess she originally worked with different-- she was funded by the medication-- by the different big medication producers and would liaise with them. That's how they got their medications. There are medications for use in the clinics and once she was the funding stopped the clinic actually realized that she was very helpful and kept her on in the clinic; started paying for her.

So she wrote to-- Raymond has coverage through-- cause he's a government worker-- so she wrote to his long-term care coverage. I dunno, Great West Life or whoever it was. Just sent all these articles about how the 10 milligrams treatment is better than the three milligrams and would you find this and they did. They funded it, they paid for all of it.

So that was awesome. We didn't have to mortgage our house for that. Because I also really wasn't working at this time either. So it was a year of not working. So we were on a single income.

There was-- they did put together a Go Fund Me page when they found out about this medication. So that was-- it was-- we'd got a lot of money from that too but there was a lot of other expenses as well. But that helped with-- so we were very appreciative that loss of income and there is other-- besides the ferry, there is other travel expenses. We had two kids here that needed to be looked after every time. Every three weeks when we went over to North Van for the treatment and things like that.

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So it was helpful. At the end of the IPI trial or the IPI treatment, they started stage-- like a fourth stage trial of this immunotherapy. So I managed to go straight-- I didn't even miss three weeks of IPI -- and the next three weeks I went into this Stage 4 trial of my immunotherapy. That was in, probably June that I started that. Then that October was when the blood test came back as having no more cancer in it. So it was pretty quick after that.