

Survivor Stories: Annette's Lessons

Self Advocacy & Looking for Help Outside Public Health Care

That's when the real research started. That's when we really realized that we need to really do something about this. At that point we kind of felt like the medical system had sort of let us down that-- there wasn't enough happening around this and we'd already knew that it was Stage 3 and so we started doing a lot more-- Raymond started doing a lot more research. Everyone needs to do their own thing, but really the Cancer Agency doesn't know everything. You know, you need to get information from multiple places and figure it out. But anyways, not everybody does that. I mean I don't know that I would be here today if we didn't advocate for myself, honestly.

So yes it's the only reason we got through the path and to the medication that I got. I believe is through self advocacy. Maybe not, but I wouldn't chance it.

The reason that you need to self advocate for-- I think is because there's so many different resources. You can't just put your trust into one person and one thing. I think that's what CTOAM kind of teaches you, is that this is path, or this is the best path, or one of the paths, one of the many paths we can take. We're going to start with this one. They 'll help you get there but it also - it needs to be in conjunction with-- the Cancer Agency had my tumor, so I needed to then go there and get it and get it over here.

And you kind of start to realize that everything needs to work together and you need to be the center point of it, or it's not gonna work together. You can't put your trust in someone else to look after you. They don't have your best-- you're very-- they do have-- I know they want to help you, but they don't have the drive that you have, or that I had to stay alive. Like I needed to stay alive. I'm sure the oncologist also wanted to help me, but his drive for me to stay alive is not the same. So you need to be that person that is going to keep yourself alive.