

LEGACY OF HOPE.

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A CHARITABLE AND GIFT PLANNING GUIDE FOR THE BARBARA ANN KARMANOS CANCER INSTITUTE

LIFE-SAVING STUDY: CLINICAL TRIAL GIVES PANCREATIC CANCER PATIENT RENEWED HOPE

HER QUEST FOR CLINICAL TRIAL OPTIONS LED HER TO KARMANOS



Cathleen Janosko noticed she had an upset stomach and felt more tired than usual in the fall of 2020, but she did not think much of it since many experience those symptoms from time to time.

A few months later, when those vague symptoms turned into a deep-seated pain in her upper right abdomen, she knew something was not right.

Janosko, who lives in rural southeast Ohio, went to a local hospital for an ultrasound. Then her doctor called with the news: The scan showed a mass in her liver. Subsequent scans revealed more masses in her pancreas and lower abdomen. The diagnosis was Stage 4 pancreatic cancer.

“I was devastated and very scared,” says 63-year-old Janosko. “I knew my cancer was life-threatening. I also thought of my parents. I had lost my father to lung cancer and my mother to uterine cancer.”

A Particularly Deadly Disease

Diagnosing pancreatic cancer early is challenging, partly because of its location in the upper-right abdominal area. Most patients are diagnosed when their disease has spread to other organs, thus eliminating surgical treatment options. This was true for Janosko.

The five-year survival rate for pancreatic cancer is just 11 percent. The survival rate for patients with Stage 4 disease is around 2 to 3 percent, per the American Society of Clinical Oncology.



Janosko’s local doctors offered little hope, giving her only two to six months to live. It is then that she started researching in earnest.

Janosko received chemotherapy at a larger area hospital and underwent genetic testing on her tumor, which revealed a rare targetable gene fusion called NRG1.

Amidst her research, Janosko made an observation. “I noticed many survivor stories had involved clinical trials. I also learned there are trials targeting NRG1 fusion in many cancers, including pancreatic cancer.

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The sites also noted the importance of getting into a clinical trial early to achieve the best results.”

Ten-and-a-half months of chemotherapy reduced Janosko’s tumors slightly, but there was not much progress.

“I uploaded my medical information to an independent virtual tumor board that gives unbiased reviews of treatment options to patients with advanced-stage disease,” outlines Janosko. She learned that Detroit’s Karmanos Cancer Center was the closest hospital offering the targeted NRG1 fusion clinical trial they advised.

Targeted Treatment

A clinical trial is a research study that examines new cancer-fighting drugs, surgical methods, diagnostic tests or disease prevention methods. Patients are closely observed for safety. Under informed consent, they can withdraw anytime from the trial. Karmanos researchers work tirelessly on these studies to find new and more effective therapies.

In December 2021, Janosko and her husband, John, drove to Detroit to meet Karmanos medical oncologist Najeeb Al-Hallak, M.D., M.S., who concluded that Janosko was a good candidate for the trial she had identified.

“Enrolling in the trial was exciting but also scary,” Janosko admits.

The couple makes the four-and-a-half-hour trip to Detroit every two weeks, where Janosko receives the experimental drug intravenously. She will finish treatment in late 2023.



Janosko’s decision paid off tremendously. In February 2022, a PET scan showed no visible tumors. The latest updated CT scan from October 2022 confirmed that her cancer is still in remission. Janosko says she had not experienced side effects from the treatment.

“Her case is nothing short of amazing,” Dr. Al-Hallak says. “I truly believe her case will have a very positive outcome.” He recommends that patients consult their oncologists to get a detailed genetic report of their tumor to see if a clinical trial is an option. “It could save your life,” he advises.

Janosko also encourages other cancer patients to consider enrolling in a clinical trial.

“My results are nothing less than a miracle,” she says. “Dr. Al-Hallak and his team at Karmanos have always treated us with the best care.”



If you or a loved one receives a cancer diagnosis, seek an evaluation from cancer experts before beginning treatment. Call 1.800.KARMANOS (1.800.527.6266) to speak with a trusted oncology patient navigator or visit karmanos.org for more information.

THE WEISBERG CANCER CENTER HAS ALMOST TRIPLED IN SIZE, PROVIDES TREATMENT ACCESS TO MORE PATIENTS

The Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute has completed an over 50,000-square-foot expansion at the Lawrence and Idell Weisberg Cancer Center in Farmington Hills. Keeping the slogan of “Caring, Healing, Expanding” in mind, the completion of the fourth and final phase gives Karmanos patients in Oakland County a conveniently located, full-service outpatient oncology center. Karmanos held a ribbon-cutting celebration and tour event on Tuesday, October 24.

“The idea was to take all of the cancer services that we provide in Detroit and bring them to the communities where our patients live,” says Brian Gamble, president of Karmanos Cancer Hospital.

“The expansion will allow me and thousands of others to receive the highest level of care with state-of-the-art equipment, close to home, in an environment that fosters healing, recovery and hope,” says 11-year breast cancer survivor and Weisberg patient Meghan Malley.

“That is our hope for patients and the reason we come to work every day,” says Joseph Uberti, M.D., Ph.D., interim president and CEO of the Karmanos Cancer Institute. “We want to make the process for our patients as easy as possible.”

Other celebration speakers included clinicians, health system leadership, Farmington Hills Mayor Vicki Barnett and her daughter, state Rep. Samantha Steckloff, a breast cancer survivor.

Both Karmanos Cancer Institute, a National Cancer Institute-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and McLaren Health Care understand the need for world-class cancer care in urban, suburban and rural communities.

Karmanos Cancer Institute thanks its project partners, including the city of Farmington Hills, Kramer Management Group, Ghafari Associates and Roncelli, Inc.

Learn more about what Weisberg offers patients at karmanos.org/farmington-hills.



The expansion and renovation at Weisberg includes:

- New imaging equipment and expanded spaces
- 3-D mammography
- Ultrasound services
- X-ray services
- An interventional radiology suite
- A newly designed radiation oncology suite
- A new infusion center
- State-of-the-art nuclear medicine
- Bone density scanning
- Additional large exam rooms
- More expanded dressing rooms
- A new retail pharmacy space and services
- Expanded lobby and waiting areas
- An expanded healing arts space
- More private treatment areas
- A massage therapy area

WHEN LIFE CHANGES, ADJUST YOUR PLAN

Ever look at the calendar and marvel at what year it is? Has that much time *really* gone by?

With time's passage comes change: Babies are born, loved ones depart. We move to a new town, start a new job. Laws get revised. We discover a new passion, a new cause. When changes happen, it is important that your estate plan reflects them. Here are key categories to consider:

Timing: Did you write your will prior to 2001? A lot has changed in the world of estate taxes. For example, the amount you can leave to heirs without paying federal tax rose from \$675,000 to almost \$13 million in 2023.

Relationship status: A change in your marital or long-term relationship means you may want to alter your will and beneficiary designations.

Children: Perhaps you now have children or grandchildren, and you want to ensure you have provided for them. Or, you created a will when the kids were young and they are now grown and financially stable.

Residence: Legal requirements and taxes vary by state. If you have moved to a new state since creating your will, you will want to see what impact that may have.

Family and friends: Our connections with people sometimes shift over time. You may want to increase or decrease the amount left to certain individuals or add and remove them from your will or beneficiary designations.

Charitable causes: If you have formed connections with certain nonprofits and want to take your support to the next level, you can set up gifts in your estate plan to ensure your values endure after your lifetime.

When creating or updating your will and other parts of your estate plan, we hope you consider why Karmanos Cancer Institute is close to your heart and how to make a difference for years to come. Contact Denise Lowe at lowed@karmanos.org or 248.226.2163 today to discuss strengthening care and services for those living with cancer and their loved ones.

Protect What Matters Most

Let's face it, estate planning can seem like a chore. But — like paying the bills or cleaning the house — it's a task that, once completed, feels great. Here are the five steps to take now to enjoy peace of mind. Return the enclosed reply card to get your complimentary guide,

5 Steps to Protect Your Family and Your Assets



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Our mission: To lead in transformative cancer care, research and education through courage, commitment and compassion.