



MANAGING CHRONIC CARE IN THE MOUNTAINS TAKES A TEAM

Friends,

Pam's story gets caught in her throat when she starts to tell it, but after a moment, she gets this out:

"I've been going to Dr. Grundy for every one of the 23 years I've lived in Telluride. I go to all my annual check-ups, I do all the tests you're supposed to do as you get older."

Pam has long enjoyed the privilege of great health and all that Telluride has to offer. So, when she called her primary care physician, Dr. Sharon Grundy last September, Pam suspected the pain was sciatica — something that could be remedied with time, pain relievers and physical therapy. Dr. Grundy wasted no time bringing Pam in for an MRI.

"But sure enough I got a scan that lit up like a Christmas tree," says Pam.

Dr. Grundy connected Pam with an oncologist in Montrose. Pam once again was confronted with an image, this time from a PET scan.

"What's that gray blob?" she asked. The doctor's reply was ominous. "Well, that's where your left sacrum is supposed to be."

The doctor immediately phoned in a peer and the decision was quickly made to elevate her scan to their preferred guru at Harvard. "This was their 'go to' for strange cancer diagnoses."

Pam has one child, Benjamin. He's 44 and Pam says he's already done it all. He lives in Dallas. Before that, New York City. He's a city guy — and you just have to wonder what he makes about his mom's life of skiing high up in the Rockies and watching elk dance outside her door!

When Pam told her son about the growing pain on the left side of her body — and the ongoing investigation into its source — doctors were working to rule out sarcoma, a relatively rare and very serious type of cancer.

Benjamin was firm. "Mom, I want you to come to Texas to UT Southwestern Medical Center."

Pam obliged and soon the team in Dallas was able to accurately diagnose Pam with metastatic melanoma. “It was not a death sentence after all,” says Pam.

With radiation and immunotherapy Pam was able to return home to Telluride where she’s presently navigating life once more, only now with the help of walking sticks.

“I ski like a crazy person. This is definitely a new pace for me,” she says. Benjamin, relieved, doesn’t mind pointing out he’s just glad she’s alive.

Throughout her journey Pam says the Telluride community, “her chosen family,” has rallied around her and inspired her to keep her spirits high. She meets with Dr. Grundy regularly and Ximena Rebolledo León, RN, her nursing care manager, calls her every single Monday.

This is when Pam chokes up once more. “Ximena is upbeat and efficient like you wouldn’t believe. She answers every question I have, and she remembers everything I tell her. She has stayed on top of all my medication, the side effects, how I am doing emotionally. She’s just an all-around friend and partner in managing this new chapter.”

In March Pam received the call she’d been hoping for. “My oncologist in Dallas phoned to say, ‘your bone is growing back, and your tumor is dead,’” says Pam. “I swear she sang that to me.”

On behalf of our chronic care management team, and Pamela Guillory, we hope you’ll consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Telluride Medical Center Foundation to ensure continued access to quality primary care and chronic care management.

Broad community support of our mission and staff is what makes — and what has always made — exceptional care possible.



Diana Koelliker, M.D.

Interim CEO, Telluride Regional Medical Center

Board member, Telluride Medical Center Foundation

P.S. Our community has a long and proud tradition of supporting our healthcare providers and medical center. I can’t overstate this: Your gift, at any amount, has an impact.