

Dave Carlson

Patient Testimonial



In April 2012, my internist was poking around, stopped, and asked, “Does that hurt?” It didn’t. But I had an ultrasound and a CT scan within two days, and was told that it appeared as though I had an extremely large hepatocellular carcinoma (hepatoma, or liver cancer). My internist sent me to a renowned liver-transplant surgeon. Within a week, he was doing an extensive laparoscopic diagnosis and taking several biopsies of the good parts and the bad parts. Yes, I had a hepatoma. He said that it was so large (over eight times the volume and mass of what is normally considered to be a large hepatoma) and was so involved with major blood vessels that he could not operate with any reasonable chance of success. He told my wife and son that I could go out in as soon as a month and that they should look into hospice services. And then he told me that if I went to see a particular colleague, she might be able to help. That is when I met Julie Zaetta, M.D., Vascular and Interventional Radiologist.



Between May and November of 2012, Dr. Zaetta performed three trans-arterial chemoembolizations (TACEs) on me. Google it. It’s really interesting. The procedure looks incredibly complex for the doctor, but is easy on the patient. By December, the original tumor was less than half its original volume, and its interior was fully necrotic. The outer envelope of the tumor, however, remains active, and it’s going to get me in the long run. But Dr. Zaetta has given me an unexpected two years of quality life, including hiking and biking, with zero degradation of any physical function. I was likely to have departed at age 73. I am now 75. And I don’t have a use-by date yet. If anything does pop up, she will see if it can be zapped with another TACE. But beware of one thing about her—she has a wicked sense of humor. And tell your internist to poke around.

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