

Bill Keller – Metastatic Lung Cancer in the Brain Patient Story

Bill's Story

In October 2014 while Bill Keller, a retired accountant was reading — one of his favorite pastimes in addition to motorcycle drag racing—the words started becoming jumbled. Although it looked like “ants scurrying around the pages,” Bill ignored it until a week later his eye continued to twitch for a solid 15 minutes. Thinking he was experiencing signs of a stroke, he had his friend drive him to see a doctor. An MRI and other tests revealed a few hours later that Bill had lung cancer that metastasized to his brain.

“They were straight to the point. I’m glad they didn’t sugar coat it,” he said.

Bill underwent six rounds of chemotherapy for his lung cancer under the care of Dr. John Waas, and 10 radiation treatments for the brain under the care of Dr. Sanjeev Bahri. “Both of them are wonderful guys,” he said. He made a lot of progress - continuing to exercise and build his muscle back after losing weight from treatment.

His main side effect of treatment was significant hair loss, which was very traumatic for Bill. However he was adamant about keeping a positive outlook the whole time. “You get out of an experience what you put in. I didn’t want to be in this experience, but going in with a positive attitude helped.”

Bill also credits his cancer care team, the connections he made along the way, and his faith and strong belief in God for helping him get through a tough time. “Everyone was so nice and comforting. I met so many great people during this journey and illness and I still talk to some of people.”

As many do, Bill thought to himself many times about his purpose in life. He frequently recalls a moment in 2005 to help him remember.

“I laid down and was no longer in the ambulance. I have never felt as content, comfortable, and safe in my life. Then, I heard a voice say, ‘Bill, you can’t stay here, you have to go back.’ Next thing I knew I’m on a gurney on my way to be taken to the hospital on a helicopter- that experience changed my life. “I’m here to help people. I’m here to talk to people. I know that’s my purpose, and I’m exceedingly happy to do it.”

Bill is feeling well and although he can no longer race motorcycles, he still enjoys reading about them and helping others learn about the sport.

His advice for people currently battling cancer, is to have faith and to not give up. “You need to have someone or something to call on, and have a strong, firm belief in it,” he said. “It’s amazing how much it helps you get through and heal. I could have given up, but I wasn’t going to let anything get me down.”