Cancer Healthcare Adventures and Celine Dion's 'Thank You'

It is time to update you on various developments, some wonderful, some quite sad.

July 4, 2018 By Robin McGee

I gave a talk at the National Healthcare Leadership Conference in Newfoundland in the first week of June. I had only 7 minutes at the end of a long day — but my story had everyone awake. Asked later what my response was to the movie version of a story very similar to mine, I told my The Cancer Olympics tale of the fax machine at my regional hospital running out of ink, resulting in many unreadable faxes being ignored. I challenged those healthcare leaders (sweeping my finger over the audience) that there was a change they could implement: eliminate the fax machine. And if they cannot, at least move to fax-to-email, so that the sender and recipient can be tracked. The following week, the quality manager of the Nova Scotia Health Authority tweeted me and others that he was identifying all the fax machines in the NSHA with an aim to eliminating them. So another small step towards responsible healthcare….

Andrew and I have just come back from 8 days in Dallas. The wonderful doctor there says that the bladder defect can be repaired transvaginally, but it will be quite risky. He made some good arguments for going with a permanent urostomy, given my limited time to live. I have decisions to make among many awful options. We were quite crushed with disappointment, as we had hoped that we would have better alternatives and more hope from the consult. But at least I got an expert opinion.

Next week we head off for a month. Camping, visiting relatives, and then…PARIS! We will use the time to bring light and fun to our hard life.

Today's song is by Canadian megasuperstar Céline Dion, "Thank You," from her 2013 album Loved Me Back to Life. I offer it up to the astoundingly generous, compassionate, and fun people I met in Dallas. Devoted patients of the doctor I saw, they put me up in their homes, had a party for me, encouraged and sympathized, and stood beside me as I absorbed my bad news. Céline's supple and soulful voice perfectly expresses my overwhelming gratitude.

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