

Close Calls and Big Dreams in My Wild Ride of Lung Cancer

Lab results bring bad news, writes lung cancer blogger Dann Wonser, but then an expanded access program brings a promising HER3 drug.

March 19, 2024 By [Dann Wonser](#)

Friends and Family,

The wild ride continues. After my final chemo round, Genevieve and I got lab results which showed increased fluid in my lungs and new fluid around my heart. Our hopes for me to buy more time by staying on ramucirumab [Cyramza] alone for the next 6-12 months went out the window. But a parachute arrived just as it was time to jump out of the plane.

Dr. Sanborn had requested that I receive patritumab deruxtecan, a HER3 drug, through the Expanded Access (compassionate use) program. She made the request eighteen weeks earlier and approval came through just when I needed it. I had to wait two more weeks for the drug to arrive, then started it two weeks ago. Had approval come a little later, I couldn't have waited. I would have had to start on a less promising early phase clinical trial, the only thing left on the board that I qualify for at this stage. How lucky can we get!

Even though it's only been two weeks I already have less edema in my legs. The cankles are gone, and now it doesn't look like every one of my piggies went to market — and ate the market.

The other part that has gone well has been my jaw. The antibiotics are working well. The pain is gone, and I can open my mouth wide enough to eat a sandwich now. It beats the liquid diet! I'm still dealing with antibiotic side effects (nausea and diarrhea), but even that has improved in the past few days. I can't claim to look or be healthy yet — an elderly woman with a walker that had a chair attached offered me her chair while standing in line at the pharmacy — but I'm getting closer. Spring is just around the corner and I'm starting to think about gardening again. That's a far cry from a few weeks ago when I couldn't dream any bigger than getting off pain meds and getting a fork in my mouth.

Not my garden! This is a dream, remember?

Hoping my updates will remain cheery for a while!

Love,

Dann

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