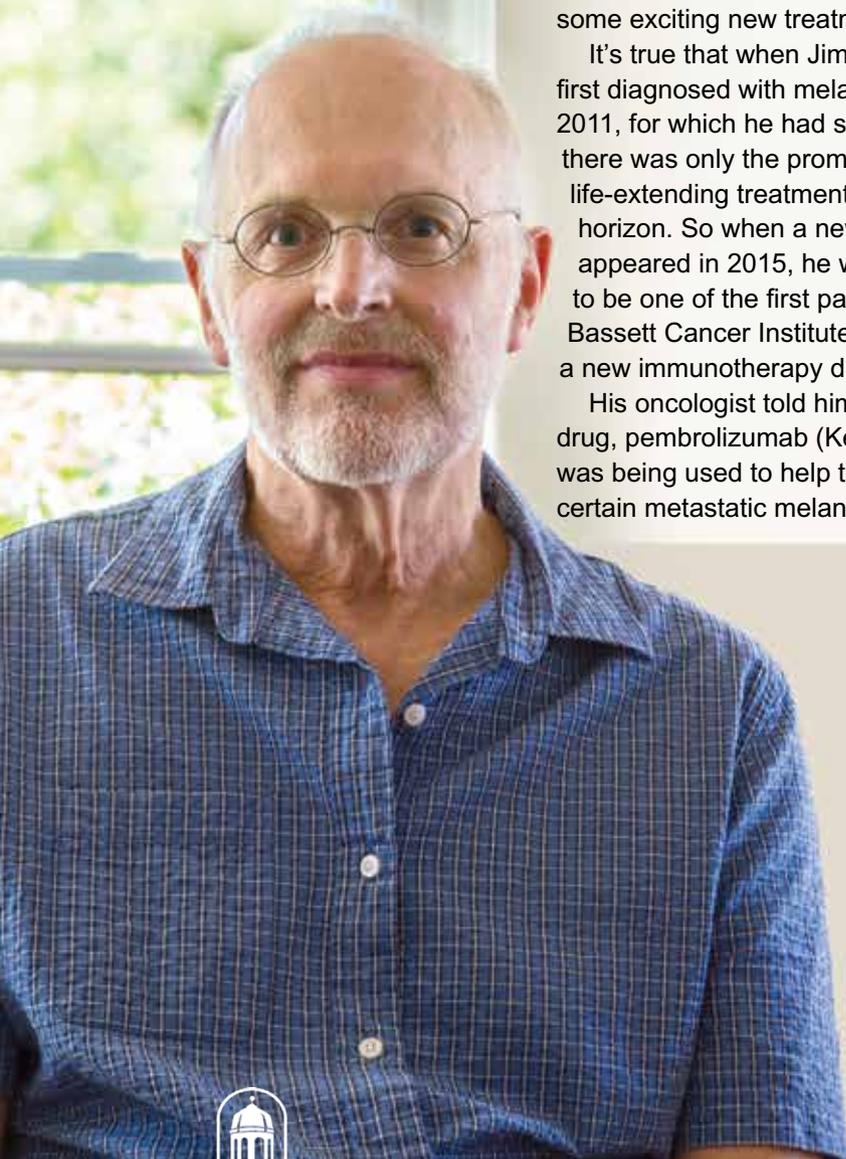


# MyHealthy Decisions

## Living fully



Bassett Healthcare  
Network

**See his story** For a video of Jim Tyler sharing his cancer journey, go to [bassett.org](http://bassett.org) and click on his story under "MyHealthy Decisions" at the bottom of the page.

other cancers. On July 8, 2015, Tyler had his first infusion, which continued every three weeks for 13 months, ending in August 2016 after 19 treatments.

### CARING COLLABORATION

Tyler, 74, kept to his normal routine, although he did cut down a bit on his rigorous gardening schedule and land stewardship of 70 acres at his home in Unadilla.

"During this time, my wife and I were able to take our planned road trip to Nebraska, which we do every fall," Tyler says. "When I was traveling, the cancer center team at Bassett made arrangements with a local cancer center for me to get infusions out there. Everyone—every single infusion nurse and every doctor—made a special point to help make it happen, to help me do all the family things that I love to do."

"That's a big part of having cancer, and that's what success looks like—just keeping your life going," he says.

"In doing all we can and doing the best for our patients, there is often strength in the collaboration with

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## Fighting cancer with immunotherapy

Immunotherapy, also called biologic therapy, is a type of cancer treatment that boosts the body's natural defenses to fight the cancer. It uses substances made by the body or in a laboratory to improve or restore immune system function.

Immunotherapy may work in these ways:

- ▶ Stopping or slowing the growth of cancer cells.
- ▶ Stopping cancer from spreading to other parts of the body.
- ▶ Helping the immune system work better at destroying cancer cells.

There are several types of immunotherapy, including monoclonal antibodies, nonspecific immunotherapies, oncolytic virus therapy, T-cell therapy and cancer vaccines.

Source: [cancer.net](http://cancer.net)

INSIDE

**2** No stranger to cancer:  
A new drug offers hope



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## Living fully

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other cancer centers that see large numbers of people with advanced melanoma,” says Anush Patel, MD, Bassett’s division chief of hematology and oncology.

Tyler’s care team includes doctors at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center who work closely with Dr. Patel and the Bassett Cancer Institute team to provide the best, most comprehensive care.

### STAYING POSITIVE

Every three-month scanning had been clear, but late in the summer of 2016, a scan showed tumors in lymph glands in several spots.

Since some immunotherapy treatments have a reduction in effectiveness after long periods of time, Tyler was started on an oral chemotherapy treatment. He continued that regimen until a scan in the spring of 2017 showed an intestinal tumor, for which he had surgery in April. He was up and walking a day after surgery.

Tyler is currently on a combination of two new medications. “I’ve been thankful that the immunotherapy treatments have extended my life and have kept tumors from my vital organs,” he says.

“The positiveness from people I’ve met through my experience is like a gift that was given to me. I am just enjoying the journey, as life is sometimes uncertain. When you have cancer, the fight is really about the ability to live your life in a healthy, positive way. Cancer can never really defeat you if you’ve been living fully...life the way you want to live it.”



Chuck Hand and his cancer care team at Herkimer Health Center: Arlene Ferri, LPN; Marcy Canary, MD; Michele Sweet, RN; and Chris Allen, RN

## Looking on the bright side

“**WE WERE HAPPY** to hear that there were new drugs to try,” say Frankfort residents Chuck Hand and his wife, Lucille.

Hand, no stranger to cancer, survived colon cancer in 2004 and bladder cancer in 2006.

After receiving a diagnosis that his lung cancer was back—this time stage IV squamous small-cell lung cancer—hearing about a promising new targeted immunotherapy was “amazing,” says Hand.

After his first diagnosis of stage III lung cancer in 2012, Hand underwent 33 treatments of radiation and six treatments of chemotherapy and had reached his radiation limit. In 2013, when he received word the lung cancer was back, “We were both basket cases, as a lot of my friends who had stage IV lung cancer are no longer here,” he says. He received another round of chemotherapy, but in June 2014

the tumors were larger.

Marcy Canary, MD, Bassett medical oncologist, said a new targeted immunotherapy drug nivolumab (Opdivo) was now available and might extend his life.

### ONE DAY AT A TIME

Since 2014, Hand has been getting infusions of immunotherapy at Bassett’s cancer center in Herkimer. “Mr. Hand tolerates the drug very well and his disease has been exceptionally well-controlled,” says Dr. Canary.

“When I come here for my treatments, it’s like old home week,” he says. “My nurses, Michele, Chris and Arlene—they’ve been excellent; they’re like family.”

Hand takes his cancer journey one day at a time and enjoys spending time with family—including two grown children and three grandchildren—and volunteering.