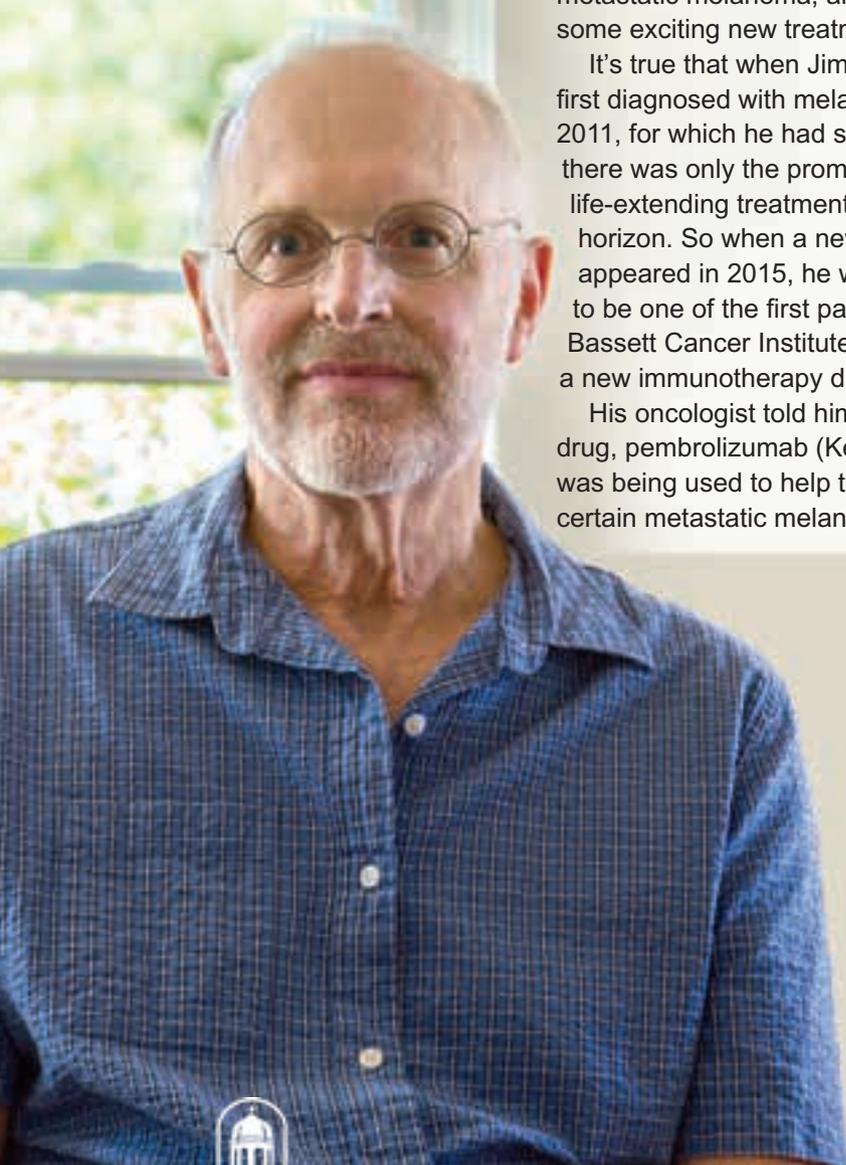


MyHealthy Decisions

Living fully



“WHEN TESTING showed that my melanoma had metastasized to my lymph nodes, I was expecting to hear, ‘Your cancer has metastasized; there is no treatment,’ so I was shocked to hear, ‘You have metastatic melanoma, and there are some exciting new treatments.’”

It’s true that when Jim Tyler was first diagnosed with melanoma in 2011, for which he had surgery, there was only the promise of new life-extending treatments on the horizon. So when a new lesion appeared in 2015, he was excited to be one of the first patients at Bassett Cancer Institute to receive a new immunotherapy drug.

His oncologist told him that a new drug, pembrolizumab (Keytruda), was being used to help those with certain metastatic melanomas and

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



Bassett Healthcare Network

See his story For a video of Jim Tyler sharing his cancer journey, go to bassett.org and click on his story under “MyHealthy Decisions” at the bottom of the page.

INSIDE

2 No stranger to cancer: A new drug offers hope



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FALL 2017

Living fully

—Continued from front page

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.

Advanced surgery via da Vinci

A new generation of the robot-assisted surgical system offers great benefits for patients

IF YOU HAVE BEEN diagnosed with a condition that may require surgery, it's important to consider all of your medical options, especially the most effective and least invasive surgical treatments available.

Bassett Healthcare Network offers the da Vinci surgical system, an innovative alternative to traditional open surgery and conventional laparoscopy. Bassett surgeons have been using the robot-assisted technology to treat cancer and other conditions for years, but a new generation system is providing surgical teams with even more advanced capabilities, including arms with a greater range of motion and a smaller camera with more sophisticated zoom performance.

"From a surgeon's perspective, the advantages of the new surgical system are unmatched," says Nicholas Hellenthal, MD, Chief of



Surgery at Bassett Medical Center. "It's helping us perform operations we couldn't do in the past. The robot arms are more flexible and articulate further, which is a great advantage when we are treating conditions in the abdominal wall or deep in the pelvis, abdominal wall hernias, and certain types of colorectal cancer."

SMALLER INCISIONS MEAN FASTER RECOVERY
Benefits to patients include significantly less pain, less blood loss,

less scarring and shorter recovery times.

"With prostate surgery in particular, there is less blood loss, and the robot arms allow us to sew delicate tissue together more easily," says Dr. Hellenthal.

Bassett surgeons use the surgical system for kidney, bladder and colon surgeries; hysterectomies and other gynecologic surgeries; and to treat hiatal hernias and reflux disease.

"This technology is here to stay, and we will see it continue to evolve," says Dr. Hellenthal. "We are only just beginning to see the incredible benefits this technology has to offer."



DA VINCI IN ACTION: Watch a video of Dr. Hellenthal discussing the benefits of robot-assisted surgery. Visit bassett.org and click on "MyHealthy Decisions."

PROSTATE CANCER TREATMENT

Hydrogel reduces radiation exposure

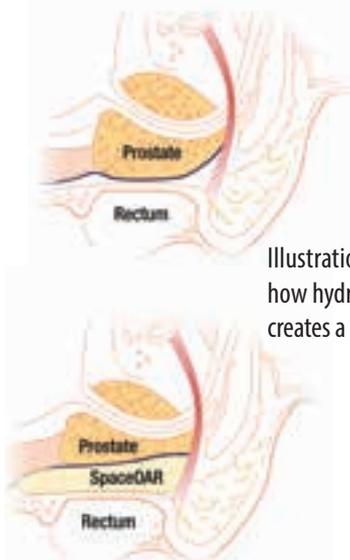


Illustration of how hydrogel creates a buffer

A NEW PRODUCT, SpaceOAR, is being used at Bassett Healthcare Network to help protect prostate cancer patients from the negative effects of radiation therapy treatment.

Because of the close proximity of the prostate to the rectum, prostate radiation therapy typically results in some radiation hitting the rectum, which can cause unwanted side-effects. "Using local anesthetic and ultrasound guidance, we inject hydrogel into the space between the prostate and the rectum," says Timothy Korytko, MD, Bassett radiation oncologist. "The product literally creates

space between the prostate and the rectum so that the gel substance receives the high-dose radiation."

"There was no question not to have it," says a 69-year-old patient. "Since there's a potential for damage to healthy tissue, if you can somehow avoid those areas, that's certainly a smart thing to do."

"It reduces toxicity by as much as 71 percent," Dr. Korytko says.



LEARN MORE ABOUT SPACEOAR:
Call 607-547-4778 or visit spaceoar.com for additional product information.

Cancer care is available at a Bassett Healthcare Network location near you. Visit bassett.org/cancer.

- ▶ Bassett Medical Center, **607-547-3336**
- ▶ Bassett-Fox Radiation Oncology, **607-431-5475**
- ▶ Cobleskill Regional Hospital, **518-254-3400**
- ▶ Herkimer Health Center, **315-867-2808**
- ▶ Oneonta Cancer Center at FoxCare, **607-433-6470**
- ▶ Tri-Town Specialty Services, **607-561-7980**



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A new hope for people with melanoma

INJECTABLE IMMUNOTHERAPY TREATMENT OFFERS PROMISING RESULTS

A new kind of treatment that's injected directly into the tumor is giving patients with metastatic melanoma another option.

The injectable treatment, called T-VEC (talimogene laherparepvec) works in two ways: It's designed to destroy cancer cells at the primary site to prompt the person's immune system to find and destroy cancer cells, and it's engineered with a protein that draws immune-boosting cells to the tumor, which boosts the drug's cancer-killing abilities.

"Significant strides have been made in the past few years for the treatment of advanced melanoma. It often requires the use of several methods over the person's course of therapy," says Anush Patel, MD, Bassett's division chief of hematology and oncology. "This new treatment works in two different ways and offers promising results for patients with metastatic tumors."

For more information on this new immunotherapy treatment, call **607-547-3336**.

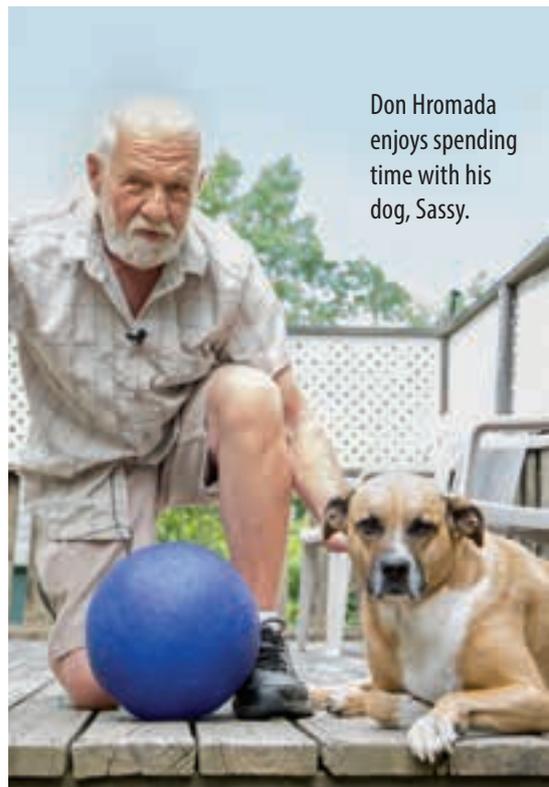
The power of clinical trials

WHEN BAINBRIDGE resident Don Hromada was given the option of participating in a clinical trial for metastatic lung cancer using immunotherapy treatment, "I told them right off, why not? What do [I] have to lose? I thought the clinical trial was the greatest thing that ever happened to me."

Hromada, 75, a longtime smoker until his late 60s, was diagnosed in 2015 and started chemotherapy that summer until it stopped working. He then met the criteria for an immunotherapy clinical trial, which he started in April 2016 and continued through March 2017. "I did it for me and [because] it could help somebody else out that had that type of lung cancer," he says.

"Bassett offers a large number of clinical trials to patients. It is surprising to some that they can be part of a study locally that they might not otherwise have had access to," says Eric Bravin, MD, Bassett oncologist.

Hromada has completed treatment, gets regular follow-up care and feels good. He continues to work around his home and spend time with family and a special dog named Sassy.



Don Hromada enjoys spending time with his dog, Sassy.

What's in a trial?

Each trial has a protocol explaining how the trial will work and what types of patients are eligible. They also:

- ▶ Are essential to finding better ways to prevent, treat and cure cancer.
- ▶ Offer innovative treatments to patients at all stages of cancer.



COULD YOU BENEFIT from a clinical trial at Bassett Cancer Institute? For more information on clinical trials offered at Bassett, visit bassett.org/clinical-trials or call **607-547-3073**.