



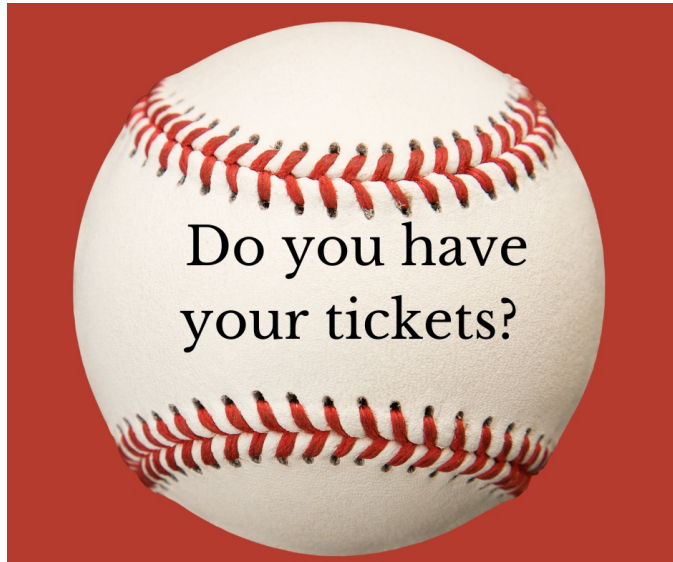
Cancer Care Celebration Saturday, July 6

Please join us for our Fourth Annual Cancer Care Celebration with the Auburn Doubledays on Saturday, July 6 at 130 N. Division St in Auburn.

FREE admission to ANYONE who [registers with this link](#). You can also pick up tickets in any of our offices.

Gates open at 6 p.m. & the game starts at 7 p.m. followed by fireworks. Before the game we will have a recognition ceremony & a gift for cancer survivors.

Plus, the first 500 guests receive a gift!



Clinical Trials at HOA: A Patient's Perspective

Mike Chura has an innate tendency to help people. He has served the public since high school. That is when he joined his local volunteer fire department and also became certified as an EMT. Mike continued on in the Emergency Services as a career firefighter/EMT for the next 27 years, eventually retiring as a district fire chief for the Syracuse Fire Department with a combined total of more than 40 years. Even while on vacation he once saved a woman's life from a burning vehicle! So, when he was asked to participate in a clinical trial at HOA he

did not hesitate to say yes.

"If my cancer treatment through a clinical trial can help make a better life for someone else, why not do it?" Mike said. "This is my chance to give back; if I can help I will."

He added that history also played a part in his decision. "If no one was willing to participate in clinical trials where would we be today? We'd be living with more pain and shorter lives."

About the Clinical Trial

Mike has stage 1 non-small cell lung cancer that was diagnosed in May 2023. In August of that year his cancer was treated with [CyberKnife radiation treatment](#) to destroy the cancer cells. That treatment was successful, and now he receives a CT scan every three months to check if the cancer has returned. So far, there has been no new growth!

His clinical trial is testing the use of the immunotherapy agent pembrolizumab, sold under the brand name Keytruda, used in conjunction with radiation therapy. The test will show whether or not this regimen will suppress cancer progression in early stage non-small cell lung cancer. The medication or placebo he receives – we do not know which – is administered to him intravenously every three weeks in a 30-minute period for 17 doses.

It's important to note that all patients at HOA who participate in clinical trials are first and foremost receiving the best care currently available for their illness. The trial is testing a potential improvement to their care that is not yet available. In most cases they receive either an addition to their current state-of-the-art care or a placebo. Equally important, patients in studies can withdraw from the program at any time for any reason.

Mike said it was helpful for him to know he could stop his trial at any time. He added that the HOA research team was very good at explaining everything about the trial, including potential side effects. He said that Karen Callahan, MSN, RN, HOA's Director of Research Operations, is the one who approached him about the trial. "She said I was an ideal candidate," explained Mike.

Pros and Cons

"The only frustrating part of this trial is that I don't know if I am getting a placebo or Keytruda," Mike said. And, in his typical selfless manner, Mike states that he also is disappointed that he can't donate blood while he is in the trial and he still has to wait until 12 months after the trial ends before he can start donating again. "But, that's it for the

negatives,” he said. “I have had no side effects.”

“But, I really hope I am getting the medication,” Mike said. “Because if by participating in this trial, my cancer might be prevented from progressing past stage 1, that would be amazing!”

Mike stated that his favorite part of being in a clinical trial is the ability to “help others down the road,” as well as getting to know the other patients at the HOA Brittonfield office.

“One of the best parts of being in the clinical trials at HOA is that you know you are not alone,” Mike said. “Plus, the people who take care of you all ‘get’ how important their job is. They all are understanding and caring with great personalities.”

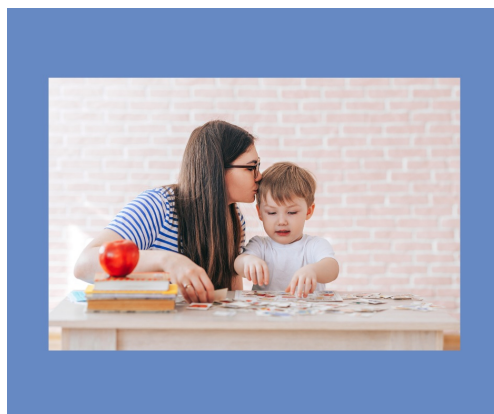
[Click here](#) to learn more about clinical trials!

Talking to Children About Cancer

Set aside a time where there will be no interruptions or distractions and you have enough time to let the child fully process and ask questions

Know that it is not uncommon for children to not have much reaction, have an extreme reaction, and everything in between.

- Give them permission to feel their feelings and express them
- Use clear language -- it's ok to use the word cancer. Saying you are sick may worry them that they could catch it, or if they were recently sick that they gave it to you.
- Answer questions with honesty that is appropriate for their age. You obviously will use different words for a teenager than a three year old.
- Kids may come back with questions days later as they work through the news.
- Talk about what doctors will do to treat your cancer and how that will affect you.
- Talk about how your illness will affect your child, your household routines, etc.
- Model healthy coping and appropriate expression of feelings.



For more specific guidelines by age, please [click here](#).

And, remember our [social work](#) staff is available to help you and your family! Just ask your team for a referral.

Cancer Survivorship



What happens now that my treatment is complete?

When should I call my doctor?

Will I know if my cancer is coming back?

Who can answer my concerns?

June is Cancer Survivors Month

After your cancer treatment is complete, the next step is to meet with our Survivorship Nurse Practitioner. She will answer all of your questions, make a plan for you to move forward, and help you navigate your future care. If you are done with treatment and don't yet have a Survivorship appointment, please call to schedule one! [Learn more here](#).

Offices: Auburn - East Syracuse - Onondaga Hill | 315/472-7504 | hoacny.com



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