



#GeisingerGrateful

Richard Burson honors Dr. Kyo Chu

At 75 years old, Richard Burson of Tunkhannock, Pa., thought he was perfectly healthy. And although he was experiencing pain in his abdomen, he thought he had done nothing more than pull a muscle. Richard's wife, Alma, joined him when he went to see a doctor. The doctor told them the pain Richard felt was caused by a hernia and scheduled him for surgery. Richard went through the surgery — but his pain did not go away.



Richard was sent for further testing, including an MRI. His physician suggested he wait a month to see if anything changed. By that time, Richard was in so much pain he was wheelchair-bound. Alma insisted they get another opinion — this time at Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center (GWV). Kyo Chu, MD, performed an aspiration, which is a type of biopsy procedure. Richard had sarcoma — a rare kind of cancer.

“Cancer. It was a terrifying thing to hear, but Dr. Chu jumped on it,” said Alma. “Dr. Chu didn’t wait, and admitted Richard right then. He had a treatment plan at the ready.”

Richard immediately began a five-week course of radiation therapy. “The experience was tough on Richard,” said Alma. He lost 35 pounds and the tumor wasn’t responding — it was too large and difficult to reach, as it wrapped around the bone in his leg and into his groin. Dr. Chu determined that the best course of action was surgery. “The surgery lasted seven hours, but someone came out to update me every 30 minutes. I appreciated that so much,” she said. Dr. Chu removed the entire tumor, and Richard was home six days later.

Sarcoma is a very aggressive form of cancer, and one that often returns within two years of being treated. Thankfully, Richard is now five years cancer-free. He still returns to Dr. Chu for regular checkups. “Richard’s not exactly the same as he was before all this, but he’s alive,” said Alma. “And Dr. Chu has become our friend — he’s the nicest doctor we’ve ever had in our whole lives! He was so sympathetic and compassionate. I truly believe he saved my husband’s leg — and his life.”

Alma and Richard have chosen to honor Dr. Chu with a gift to the Henry Cancer Center at GWV twice a year. “We give back in appreciation for all his medical expertise,” said Alma. “We like to think that when we honor Dr. Chu, we’re also helping to ensure that the level of care we experienced is always available for others who need it.”