

Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



DAVID MOLINA, 70
TYPE OF CANCER: THROAT CANCER ON A TONSIL-STAGE 4

The Basics:

- **RESIDENCE:** Victorville
- **OCCUPATION:** Retired from 50 years in the food distribution industry
- **FAMILY:** Noreen Molina, wife; Terri Molina, sister; Taylor Barnes, 22, granddaughter;
- **HOBBIES:** Used to play golf
- **PHILOSOPHY:** Honesty

By Alberta Hale Crigler

Thirteen years ago, David Molina went to the doctor to check "a spot" on his tonsil.

When he saw it, the family doctor sent him "right to the surgeon," David said.

"The surgeon said, 'you are having surgery tomorrow.' I said, 'I don't think so.'"

"I was on a project and delayed surgery for two weeks. What's another two weeks?"

"They took the tonsil out and found it was in my lymph nodes."

David underwent 28 chemo and 45 radiation treatments.

"That was the first time I had cancer," he said. "I never gave up hope, though. I don't know why, but I wasn't afraid."

"What really made me not afraid was my wife, Noreen. She is my rock."



That was just the beginning of a series of medical nightmares the Molinas have experienced.

"A year later they found a fungus in my lungs," David said. "They said it originates in Louisiana, but we have never been there. They removed part of my lung."

Then, in 2008, David was diagnosed with prostate cancer. That involved another surgery, but doctors ruled out more chemo or radiation, telling him it "would be too much at that time," David said.

"I have always had low blood pressure. All of this chemo and radiation affects your whole body. Now, I have a heart condition."

"(During the intervening years), I have had heart attacks, two double bypasses, and 19 stents put in."

"My job was 'eliminated,' and we couldn't afford our house in Anaheim anymore. We moved up here."

"David is unusual, because one of the arteries in his heart is thin and convoluted," Noreen said. "One doctor said it is like a snake."

During the last year, doctors discovered cancer in David's jaw, which he said is attributed to his previous radiation treatments.

"The treatments caused my teeth to rot and cancer in my upper jaw," he said.

The affected teeth and gums were removed.

Nine weeks ago, a tumor was discovered on David's colon.

"I went back into surgery for that," he said. "My body went into shock after surgery. I couldn't walk and my blood pressure was down all the time."

"For nine weeks, I couldn't move from my knees to my feet."

"Finally, they gave me some steroids. The first time, I could stand up for four minutes. "I had more steroid injections, and the next day I was walking around the hospital."

While in the hospital, David was diagnosed with Addison's disease.

"They want to wean him off steroids and use an ADD drug instead," Noreen said. "This time he got physical therapy every day in the hospital."

"(When David came home), I was getting no help, I hadn't slept, and I wasn't eating."

"He couldn't get up at all – he would go into a catatonic state. It can last five minutes to a half hour."

“That was the first time I had cancer.”

"The first time it happened, I thought he had died, and I called paramedics."

"We are living on Social Security and don't have a lot of money. The doctor said I should hire a nurse."

"I said, 'Right, are you going to pay for it? We are lucky to pay our mortgage and have food to eat.'"

"He has his Masons – his brothers at the lodge. They have helped us so much. They built the wheelchair ramp in the house."

"I also belonged to the Shriners and the Knights Templar," David said. "It's all a family. I do it because I love to help people as much as I can."

"Everybody loves David," Noreen said. "He ran the kitchen at the lodge."

"He has always been the cook. I used to be spoiled."

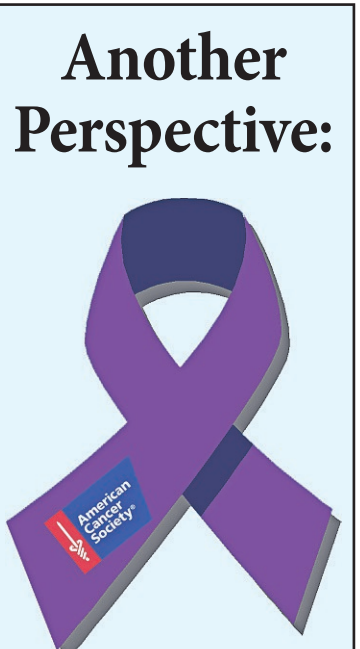
"I tell him, 'It was false advertising you gave me 25 years ago.' I used to say he was my bulldog, but now he is my Chihuahua."

Recently, David was placed on hospice.

"When I am laying down, my blood pressure is really good. When I sit on the edge of the bed, it drops, when I stand up, I go down," he said.

"They don't know why. They are trying to increase my blood pressure."

"I don't want to lose hope, ever," Noreen said. "He just takes one day at a time."



Another Perspective:

David Molina wanted to share his story with the Survival & Hope series because, "there is not enough mention of the other half, what they go through," he said.

"People really have to be concerned when they have cancer and radiation: There will be a lot of damage later."

"You almost never hear anything about the other half. Noreen has been going through this for 13 years."

"She and my family suffer too."

"We are blessed that we can sit here and talk like this about our relationship."

"She is my rock; we love each other madly."



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