

Clinical Trials

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More than four years ago my primary physician discovered cancer in my liver, and I started on conventional chemotherapy. Several months later, we found out it was actually breast cancer metastasized to the liver. We changed to a combination of several different types of chemotherapy for the next three years. The cancer didn't get worse, but it didn't get much better either.

Before this journey with cancer, I have to admit some ignorance of clinical trials – I thought one group was a test group, and the second group was a placebo group. Then I researched new therapies and saw that by participating in a clinical trial, patients have access to new treatments not available elsewhere. Becoming educated about the true nature of clinical trials and having access to new treatment was reassuring.

Last spring, my tumor marker numbers started rising, indicating possible cancer spread. We decided the current strategy was becoming ineffective and we needed to do something different. I was very pleased when a clinical trial for dosage determination of an already approved drug was offered.

Before I started the clinical trial, I travelled nearly 250 miles to Kansas City to receive treatment at the KU Cancer Center. But it turns out, through the Midwest Cancer Alliance, KU partners with cancer centers across the state and I was able to continue my treatment at Heartland Cancer Center in Great Bend – only about 60 miles from home!

Clinical trials are so important to collect data for research because you never know when an exciting breakthrough occurs or leads to further innovations or explorations of treatments. And those treatments could be the answer for you or many others.