

## Robert Towner Story

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I am not one to go to the doctor, never really felt like anything was a good enough reason to go. One night I was having severe pain and vomiting, my family convinced me to go to the emergency room. It turns out that the pain was caused by Stage IV Colon Cancer. It was bad enough to prompt the doctor into saying, “we do not know how you are even still walking around with the amount of pain this would be causing you”. I didn’t know the warning signs, nor did I really feel like I was in that much discomfort on a daily basis. Some people just don’t feel it like others I suppose.

My journey has been a long one. I was told that I had 2 years to live max. Immediately after that scan, they wheeled me into surgery. It was April 2020, the height of the pandemic. My family was not able to be there with me and I know that it killed them as much as it killed me to not have them there. Once I got out of the hospital, I had 6 months of chemo ahead of me. These were long days from 8am-5pm. No one was allowed back with me, but my daughter drove me to and from every time. Finally, my numbers were down, and I could stop chemo.

In December 2020, I had my second surgery which was a hot chemo bath in my abdomen. This ended with me in the ICU for about a week and unconscious for most of it. This time though I was allowed one visitor a day. The first night my daughter spent the night and came pretty much everyday after with visits from my son and wife as well.

I was in remission for about a year and a half, technically I am still in remission because there is no tumor to be found. Though in April 2022, I was told that my markers were high, and I had the choice whether to start chemo again to get ahead of it or to let it be. I chose the fight. I continue to choose to fight be here for my kids and my grandkid. Even though I am still doing chemo, I am a survivor, a fighter, and heck of a family man. I do not let this diagnosis keep me from helping my son, spending time with my daughter and grandson, or from working (even if it is the day after chemo). There is nothing I can do to change the past, but I won’t let it keep me from living.