

UCLA Clinical Trial Targets Cancer Stem Cells: A Patient's Story

When Frank Gonzales was diagnosed with colorectal cancer in November 2010 it was the start of a long fight against the disease.

Chemotherapy helped keep the cancer in check, but it wasn't a cure. So when Frank heard about a new experimental treatment, that seeks out and destroys cancer stem cells, he was intrigued.

Frank talked to UCLA's Dr. Zev Wainberg, who is running the clinical trial funded by CIRM: "I knew it was a study and everybody wasn't getting the same dosage but after having gone through all the other treatments this was easy."

Frank took a single pill every day, and says he experienced no side effects. After six months he had to drop out of the trial to receive radiation.

Frank's cancer is now in remission and he's been able to go back to work. He doesn't know if the pills helped but he's proud of being a stem cell pioneer and hopes the first-in-human therapy proves effective so that one day many others will be as lucky as he is.

"It is pretty amazing. I hope they close in on it. Figure this thing out, because there's a lot of need for it."

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