

# MARK TEMPELMEYER: A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE WITH STAGE IV PROSTATE CANCER

In September 2022, Mark Tempelmeyer, 64, received a call that changed his life. Following his most recent prostate cancer screening, his prostate-specific antigen, or PSA, score was concerning. The very next day, Hurricane Ian hit the coast of Florida, devastating the community where he and his wife, Helene, were living.

## *Find me the best in Austin*

Mark and Helene, both retired tech executives, split their time between Punta Gorda, Florida, and Austin. Very careful with their health, Mark and Helene schedule physical check-ups every six months. The results from Mark's most recent PSA test, which measures a protein made by cells in the prostate gland, came back with a score of 32 – far above the normal range of below three. His previous tests results had been 0.8, and he was very worried.

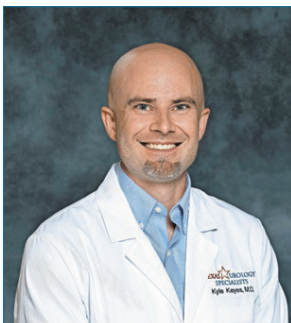
With Punta Gorda still reeling from the destruction of Hurricane Ian, Mark knew he couldn't delay following up with his doctor on the alarming PSA test results. So he sought care in Austin, his "second" home town.

"I reached out to a contact in Austin and told them to find me the best urologist in Austin," Mark recalls. "That's how I was introduced to Texas Oncology."

## *Everything changed*

After making their way

back to Austin, Mark met with Kyle Keyes, M.D., urologist at Texas Oncology Specialists–Austin and Austin Midtown. Dr. Keyes immediately ordered another PSA test and found that Mark's cancer was moving at a fast pace, with his score rising from a 32 to a 53. A subsequent biopsy showed significant cancer throughout the prostate and beyond. Mark was diagnosed with stage IV prostate cancer.



**Kyle T. Keyes, M.D.,**  
Texas Oncology  
Specialists–Austin and  
Austin Midtown

Mark recalls when Dr. Keyes walked into the room, reading the look on his face, and knowing the news wasn't good. The plan initially was to have Mark's prostate surgically removed. However, the cancer had spread to his bones and lymph nodes, which, Mark says, "changed everything."

Upon hearing that surgery wasn't an option, Mark said, "We were shocked. It wasn't what we expected, and we were faced with a frightening and uncertain future."

"Stage IV prostate cancer is often difficult to cure,

although patients may live for several years with effective treatment," says Dr. Keyes. "Advances in treatment have resulted in new options that reduce symptoms and improve survival. Mark's upbeat nature and positive outlook to do whatever it takes to manage this disease will help him to fight his cancer," he says.

## *I can't be as sick as they say I am*

Mark's cancer was extremely aggressive. "Maybe three to four weeks after I saw Dr. Keyes, my PSA number had risen to 157." What troubled Mark is that he never had any side effects or warning signs that would have helped him catch this cancer sooner.

"It was really confusing, and I had this overwhelming feeling of numbness," continues Mark. "I was in denial. I can't be as sick as they say I am – I feel fine. I wanted treatment ASAP. This was growing rapidly, and I didn't want to spend any more time getting started."

## *Great potential in clinical trials*

Mark was referred to Mike Lattanzi, M.D., medical oncologist at Texas Oncology–Austin Central. "I remember him walking in saying 'you look a lot better than I thought you'd look' based on my numbers," laughs Mark.

Because surgery was not an option, Mark immediately began receiving a hormonal

shot every 90 days which chemically stops the production of testosterone.



**Mike Lattanzi, M.D.,**  
Texas Oncology–Austin  
Central

Dr. Lattanzi also offered the opportunity to participate in a clinical trial and explained to Mark and Helene about advancements in the field of oncology, giving patients a longer life and better outcomes. In Central Texas alone, Texas Oncology patients currently participate in more than 55 clinical trials to treat a variety of cancers.

In December 2022, Mark elected to participate in a placebo-controlled clinical trial to test the efficacy of combining the standard hormone therapy with a new medicine. "Mark is one of the first patients in the world to (potentially) receive this particular treatment," says Dr. Lattanzi. "Clinical trials are always designed with strict ethical standards, such that all patients electing to participate receive nothing less than the modern standard of care. In Mark's case, he favored an aggressive approach to treatment, and a clinical trial offered him the chance to receive an escalated –

albeit still investigational – combination therapy."

## *The "new normal"*

Mark is living what he refers to as the "new normal." His body is accepting the treatment, and while his immune system is rebuilding, he's tired more easily, and his taste buds have changed.

Exercise has also become a very important part of Mark and Helene's life. They hired a trainer and work with her for one hour, three times a week. "I started a program based on a suggestion from one of my doctors, and I credit that to much of my success, both physically and emotionally."



**Mark and Helene**  
Tempelmeyer

"There are very few patients as motivated as Mark," says Dr. Lattanzi. "Since this cancer diagnosis, Mark has transformed his lifestyle, embracing physical exercise and a healthy diet. I also get the sense that Mark's cancer diagnosis gave him a fresh new perspective on life. Instead of focusing on his disease, Mark made an active choice to live his life to the fullest."

## *A second chance at life*

Mark's test results since joining the clinical trial are nothing short of amazing. At the end of December, just one month in, his PSA rate had gone from 157 to 6. His care team has been astounded at how quickly his body responded.

Mark's most recent PSA score registered a 0.1, and his scans have shown that his prostate looks back to normal. The cancer is no longer present in the lymph nodes and is almost three-quarters gone from his bones. While the cancer is no longer growing, Mark knows that it will also never be completely gone.

"I am so very grateful for the team at Texas Oncology and that they picked oncology as their field," he says. "I know that I will think of them and love them for the entirety of my life."

Today, Mark says he feels good, but the future still holds a lot of questions. "The reality is that I have a serious illness with high potential recurrence rate. However, thanks to the team at Texas Oncology, it is very likely I can live with this cancer. It is a second chance at life."

*In 2023, Texas is estimated to have 17,230 new cases of prostate cancer and 2,290 expected deaths. For more information, visit [TexasOncology.com](https://www.texasoncology.com).*

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