



Cindy N. was diagnosed with lung cancer in the spring of 2017. At the time of her diagnosis, Cindy was working two jobs, was incredibly tired, and felt she could barely get through the day. After a trip to urgent care, she was diagnosed with influenza B. Her x-ray revealed something out of the ordinary in her lungs, the doctor said it was probably due to the illness but to come back for an X-ray just to make sure it was gone. Cindy scheduled another appointment, a decision which ultimately changed her life.

At the time of her diagnosis, Cindy's cancer was contained in the upper left lobe of her lung. As a result, it was concluded that removing that part of the lung would be the best step forward. While shocked at this diagnosis, she felt hopeful at the idea of surgery. However, not all of the cancer was removed with the surgery. A year later, Cindy progressed to Stage 4 lung cancer and was given a prognosis of nine months to live.

While she was told the odds were not in her favor, there was a chance she would have a biomarker which would give her better odds of survival with targeted therapy. Fortunately, Cindy's biomarker test revealed that her tumor had a mutation called ROS1, ultimately leading to a successful game-changer for Cindy's outlook. In the spring of 2018, she began a targeted therapy which held her steady until 2020 when she had a wedge removed from her lower left lung.

This October, her scans revealed that she still has a spot on her lower left lobe that is growing. She is currently undergoing radiation treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester.

Cindy says that meeting with a psychiatrist about grief has largely changed her attitude about the challenges she is facing. A Stage 4 diagnosis left her devastated, however, she came to realize that she could either spend her entire life living in fear of dying or try to live the best life she could live as she enjoys time with her children, grand-children, and great-grandchildren. Mental health is a priority for those living with lung cancer, and Cindy has improved hers with professional help, support groups and staying connected to the A Breath of Hope lung cancer community. She remains hopeful and optimistic.

