

HEALTH

Leading Cancer Experts Help Patients Decide Best Treatment Options

NewsUSA

(NU) - There are few words uttered by a doctor that have more of an emotional impact than "You have cancer." At that point, the most precious commodity that one has to hold on to is time. It can be time-consuming and difficult to know whom to consult, or how to move forward, let alone which treatment option is best.

Now, however, some patients, many from overseas, have the option of leaving that work to experts. CANCER PANELS, the brainchild of Jim Martell, whose involvement in the field started when a friend was diagnosed with cancer, offers a service that no other entity in the world provides. It is able, within weeks, to bring together, in one room, leading cancer experts to discuss an individual case for 3 to 4 hours. These unique in-person panels are chaired by Dr. David Sidransky, considered a world-leading cancer authority in the field of molecular diagnostics, targeted therapies and individualized patient treatments.

The panelists, usually seven to twelve, come from some of the world's leading cancer centers such as: Sloan-Kettering, M.D. Anderson, Johns Hopkins, Mayo, Dana-Farber, Harvard, UCSF, Duke and others. They share their knowledge in an effort to come up with the best consensus treatment recommendation to the patient's treating physician.

Discussion focuses on various treatment and research approaches, both conventional and novel, advanced chemotherapeutic drugs and biologics. In addition, many

attendees are also principal investigators in leading clinical trials so those options are also available. Instead of a collection of divergent opinions, a consensus treatment recommendation is reached. The panel thus maximizes options available and greatly improves the patient's ability to obtain the most appropriate treatment at an earlier stage.

These panels are totally different from tumor board panels, which every cancer hospital holds on a weekly basis to review their cases. There, they usually have only experts from that particular institution who spend little time on one case as they have many to review. CANCER PANELS, on the other hand, flies in the best experts in the world to sit together and discuss only one case for hours, with treatment recommendations independent of any treatment bias from any cancer institution.

The goal of a panel is to gain time and quality of life for the patient. Medicine is currently advancing by the minute and it is a realistic hope that within this extra time that a panel could provide, the next life-saving treatment on the horizon may become available. In addition to having their own innovative treatments identified, patients who hold these panels create an opportunity to help those who are less privileged to benefit from life-saving options that would otherwise never have become known to them. Benefits of a single panel are manifold and reach beyond the individual patient.

For more information, visit www.cancerpanels.com.