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PRESS RELEASE

A hearty desire for life gives patient a second chance

A KENDAL lady who had given up on having an active life because of a heart disorder is being given a second chance after being referred to cardiac specialists in Blackpool.

Jennifer Martinez, 62, is thanking staff at the Lancashire Cardiac Centre for the 'second chance' of life she says she has had after being told at another hospital there was nothing that could be done about her atrial flutter. She would now like to raise awareness of the services available in Blackpool.

She said: "A year ago last November I suddenly realised I had a very fast pulse rate. I went to the doctor as I was travelling to Egypt but instead of going on holiday I ended up with a stay in hospital and I was diagnosed with an atrial flutter.

"Later I went in to my local hospital for several treatments but when they were unsuccessful my doctor told me, at the end of October, that there was nothing more they could do and at the age of 62 I would be on vast amounts of medication and have to put up with it for the rest of my life. When I was told this, talk about depression, I was devastated.

"I was, and have always been, a very active person, I had come through cancer and all sorts of problems but it would seem that I would have to put up with this flutter, have no energy and be at risk of stroke.

"I have always been really active and I used to go for coffee with my friends and then out afterwards shopping but when I was ill I went for coffee and then had to go home to bed, I couldn't even make it to the shops. At first I thought it was the medication making me feel that way, I didn't understand it was the flutter and I only found that out when I went to Blackpool.

"The annoying thing as well was, there was nothing I could do to make it better, such as giving up smoking and drinking, which I had done years previously so I really was just stuck with it; I was depressed and frightened.

"I knew about the work being done in Blackpool for heart problems and I have a good relationship with my GP so I asked to be referred for a second opinion.

When I got to Blackpool everything was just so different, the attitudes of the consultants were positive and fantastic.

“Blackpool was like going into a family home in comparison to where I had been before; I was so comfortable and relaxed. It was wonderful and that’s coming from someone who doesn’t like hospitals. I saw Dr Ranjt More first and was then referred to Dr Scott Gall and both were supportive and professional. When I was in the procedure, which was scary, the doctors and nurses were great and they talked to me the whole time putting me at ease.

“In the span of 20 days I was seen, diagnosed, treated and I had left hospital cured. I feel wonderful now. As they say I’ve got my ‘mojo’ and my fight back again.

“The thing that worries me is that I know I can be assertive and I research problems and get a second opinion but what about all the other people who aren’t like me and just have to live with it? What about the people who do not know you can refer yourself? I want people in Kendal, and everywhere else, to know that they can be referred to Blackpool.

“It’s definitely changed my life. I had no energy before I had the procedure. Dr Gall tells me there is only a two per cent chance of the flutter coming back and if it does I will come in again to get another procedure done. I really feel like my future is bright; I’m normal again and looking forward to going back to my voluntary work.”

Jennifer used to work for Lancashire County Council as the County Lead for the Education, Training and Employment of Young Offenders and she now volunteers as a patient representative on the cancer peer review group after having breast cancer five years ago. She also volunteers for Age UK in her spare time which such things as bric or brac sales and putting things on ebay to raise money for the charity.

After a successful treatment here, Jennifer, whose first appointment was on November 3rd, is now looking forward to doing a peer review in Leeds in this March.

Consultant Cardiologist, Dr Gall said: “We try to get the best possible outcomes for all of the patients we see at the Lancashire Cardiac Centre and we are delighted when we can improve someone’s life so dramatically, as in Mrs Martinez’s case, particularly when they have been told previously that there is nothing more that can be done.

“We would encourage referrals from all over the region, and beyond. Patients with heart rhythm problems can, in fact, be referred directly to the Lancashire Cardiac Centre by their GP.”



PIC: Patient Jennifer Martinez.

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