

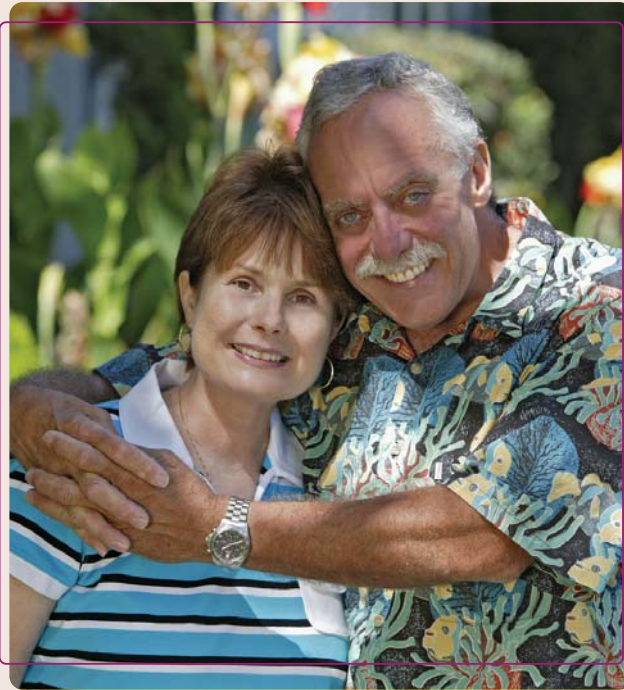
Karey Heller & Family

When No Option Was Not an Option for Multiple Myeloma

Karey Heller's medical chart was already extremely thick when she had her initial consultation with Dr. Tchekmedyian at Pacific Shores Medical Group. She was diagnosed with advanced multiple myeloma, had seen several different doctors, and received all standard treatments and several experimental treatments. She was in constant pain, her kidneys were failing, her immune system was deteriorating, and she was frequently in the hospital due to multiple infections. Before meeting with Dr. Tchekmedyian, she was told there were no more treatment options available.

When Dr. Tchekmedyian first met with her, he was struck by Mrs. Heller's determined spirit. "She was young, had a very active mind, and she was not ready to give up. We had to find an angle, a window, something to work with," says Dr. Tchekmedyian.

Dr. Tchekmedyian's first priority was to stabilize her kidney function and treat her infections. Once her condition stabilized, Dr. Tchekmedyian and his team worked to find treatments that would control her myeloma, restore her immune function, and maintain a proper level of hydration.



Karey and Norm Heller

"We had to find an angle, a window, something to work with."

They also prescribed a progressive physical therapy program. The combination of treatments worked wonders. While it appeared that the end was imminent when Dr. Tchekmedyian first met her, a year later, her condition has improved, she is more active, and she continues to make slow but steady progress.

"She looks great! She is more active, she keeps her sense of humor, she is incredibly disciplined about her treatment, and it is so rewarding to see her improvement," Dr. Tchekmedyian adds.

"We are making good progress in myeloma therapy. In fact, Dr. Hank Yang in our team, recently published an important article addressing the latest methods of myeloma treatment in the Journal of Clinical Oncology. #20, Pg. 4 We are shifting from aggressive chemotherapy programs, which have serious side effects, to non-chemotherapy options, which allow better control of the disease with fewer adverse side effects. We are moving toward making myeloma a chronic, controllable disease. With combinations of new treatments, we are achieving better results."



The Heller Family



Daughter Korina and son Eli

"Family is most important to us. We are a team!"

"T" Stands for Tenacity

When I was diagnosed in June 2001 with multiple myeloma, I was clear on one thing "no option was not an option," for me or my family. In June 2003, the challenges of my cancer were directly affecting my quality of life and health. I had already participated in clinical trials, standard treatments, and a variety of drug therapies. My options had suddenly turned in the direction of palliative care and later I learned that meant hospice care. I was at a turning point where feelings of hopelessness were close behind. With the support and love from my family, I continued to move forward.

It was my curiosity to find out more about clinical trials, my tenacious nature to continue moving forward, and serendipity, if you will, that would lead me to Dr. Tchekmedyian and his glorious team.

I finally found the one, the doctor that no matter what would stand by me, for me and with me. Dr. "T" stands for "Tenacity" and he certainly is a Doctor's Doctor.

Written by Karey Heller

Our Family is a Team

Being adult children of a parent challenged by cancer is no easy task. Both Korina and Eli explain that they are always available to support their mom and dad no matter what. "The most important thing for us is to keep our family life as normal as possible," says Korina. "Open, honest communication allows us not only to understand what our Mom is going through, but also prepares us for what lies ahead, so we can continue to be prepared to help and support our Mom and Dad," says Eli. "Family is most important to us. We are a team!"