NEWS RELEASE

New cancer therapies give hope and healing to a captain

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As Captain John Biegel continues to battle against cancer, he is grateful for all those who have supported him.

American Airlines Captain John Biegel's journey with cancer began when he started feeling sharp pains on his left side, just below his ribcage, in the fall of 2014. After almost three months of tests and specialists, John received a phone call that changed the course of his life forever. "The results of your biopsy came back. You have pancreatic cancer." He knew that pancreatic cancer was one of the deadliest kinds of cancer a person could get.

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"I felt like I had been slugged in the stomach," John remembers. He was unsure how to tell his wife and children of his now uncertain future. He credits his faith and God's presence for helping to ease some of his anxiety and give him the courage to move forward with his treatment. "I knew I was in good hands, regardless of what lay ahead," John remembers, "I have been blessed by God's presence, a supportive family and an incredible medical team throughout this journey."

The following week John found himself in the skillful hands of Dr. Nicholas Nissen. While in surgery, Dr. Nissen discovered that John's cancer was encapsulating the blood vessels feeding his pancreas. John says the quick thinking of his incredibly talented surgeon helped to save his life. The treatment that followed included three months of chemotherapy, and five long weeks of radiation and chemotherapy combined. The physical toll of his treatment was harsh, but John gradually recovered. In September 2015, almost a year after his initial diagnosis, John received news that his cancer was in remission.

Unfortunately, cancer would reenter John's life in May of 2016. This time cancer had returned in a lymph node close to John's spinal cord and had spread to his lungs. It was time to attack his cancer in a new way. John's team of doctors at MD Anderson decided that he was a good candidate for immunotherapy. The game plan was to let the cancerous lymph node grow and then harvest it during surgery. Once removed, John's doctors would use cells taken from the lymph node and engineered to create a "personalized vaccine." "It is a new and promising treatment, and I am very hopeful," John exclaims.

So far John has beaten the odds against cancer and is truly humbled by all the support he has received throughout his journey. He is eternally grateful for his medical team, his American Airlines coworkers, family, friends and even people he doesn't know, who have kept him in their prayers. It's his hope that his story of perseverance in the face

of cancer will help others fighting the disease as well.

In 2017, the American Cancer Society estimates that 53,670 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and that 43,090 people will die from it. Cancer research and clinical trials to find new effective treatments are vital for many patients across the United States and around the world fighting this disease. Stories like John's illustrate how new therapies are giving hope to patients determined to become survivors.

Immunotherapy is one of the most exciting developments in cancer treatment. Stand Up To Cancer is proud to be at the forefront of this potentially life-saving treatment and the research that's helping to save more lives.

