



NEWS RELEASE

Pilot wins the race against cancer with the help of American's medical benefits

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As a competitive triathlete, LAX-based Capt. Kevin Elmore has run, swam and cycled all over the globe, even representing the United States in 10 international triathlon/multi-sport world championship events for his age group.

But in June 2021, Kevin learned he had a new opponent, one that would test his stamina and endurance like no other had before. He was now in the fight for survival against Stage 4 gastric lymphoma, a rare form of cancer that develops in the stomach and can cause a number of digestive and abdominal symptoms.

"After my cancer diagnosis, I went into race mode," Kevin said. "I was aiming for the podium of beating cancer. And I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the benefits at American Airlines."

Not only did American's medical and leave benefits help Kevin — a father and grandfather — get the treatment he needed and take the time to recover, but they offered him peace of mind.

"When you're going through a battle like cancer, not having to worry about your benefits is huge."

Options for treatment

Through his American health plan's medical network, Kevin chose to receive his cancer care at the National Institutes of Health-designated City of Hope in Duarte, Calif. After eight grueling rounds of chemotherapy over several months, he was able to return to the flight deck. But two months later, his cancer returned.

Fortunately, City of Hope offered a new, advanced form of immunotherapy called CAR T cell therapy.



“Because it was new, it was extremely expensive,” Kevin said, noting the out-of-pocket cost hovered around \$1 million. “But again, having the insurance I had, I didn’t need to worry about any of that.”

Throughout his cancer journey, Kevin only had to pay his deductible, out-of-pocket maximum and some copays. Not having to worry about paying the total cost of his health care allowed him to focus solely on recovery, which was no small feat considering the debilitating side effects that resulted from the CAR T cell therapy. Kevin suffered from fevers, seizures and neurotoxicity and spent weeks fighting to regain his abilities to walk, speak and write.

“My mentality was, ‘I need to give everything I have to making a full recovery,’” he said. “I was going to podium at kicking cancer’s butt.”

Crossing the finish line

On May 25, 2022, Kevin finally received the news that he was cancer-free.

“I sat there and cried like a baby when the oncologist told me,” he said. “I thought, ‘Yeah, I did podium. I did beat cancer — a second time.’”

Kevin said he is grateful for the safety net his benefits provided, because now he’s back in the cockpit and to his active lifestyle. He’s also pursuing his second master’s degree — this time in leadership at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. When he’s not in the air, he hopes to use public speaking as a way to share his story and inspire others.

“For some people, cancer is very private for them, and I get it,” he said. “But my mentality is, if I can share my story and help one person, it’s worth sharing. Whatever I can do, I’ll do it.

To learn more about American’s medical benefits, visit my.aa.com.