

The Greenville Advocate



Urology Centers of Alabama physicians Dr. Tom Moody, left and Dr. Tom Holley, right, present Jimmy Love of Camden with an "I Survived" cap following Love's successful prostate cancer surgery. The UCA conducted a free prostate cancer screening in Greenville that detected Love's cancer in its early and most treatable stages.

Decision to have prostate exam saves truck driver's life

By Angie Long (Contact) | Greenville Advocate
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Come Thanksgiving Day 2009, Jimmy Love will have much to be grateful for.

The 56-year-old big rig truck driver believes he truly dodged a bullet.

And it all started with a radio interview he was listening to while on the road.

"I heard Roscoe Miller and this doctor talking about a free prostate cancer screening that was going to be happening in Greenville. Now, I hadn't been feeling bad, but I figured I might as well get checked out," Love recalled.

Love, along with 55 other men, underwent a rectal exam and a blood test at the Butler County Health Department, where doctors and staff from Urology Centers of Alabama of Birmingham were conducting the screening.

While the rectal exam didn't indicate a problem, "my blood test came back abnormal," Love said.

"As soon as we heard that, my daughter started making calls."

A re-check confirmed his family's fears: Love, a man who'd been "feeling fine" and going about his usual routine, had prostate cancer.

"That really isn't unusual," said Dr. Tom Moody, the UCA physician who diagnosed Love's cancer. "Early prostate cancer has no symptoms. If you wait until you have symptoms, it's often too late. But with early

detection and treatment, prostate cancer is almost always curable."

Love underwent surgery by UCA surgeon Dr. Tom Holley last week and has been given a clean bill of health. He will return to Birmingham for regular check-ups for the rest of his life, but Moody says he believes Love is going to do very well.

"If he takes care of himself, stays at a normal weight, exercises - there's no reason to think he won't live a long life," Moody said.

Love says he is very grateful the free screenings were available.

"Otherwise, I would have never known. I mean, I wasn't hurting or sick or anything," he said.

Moody said newer, more advanced techniques allow for minimally invasive surgery that have done away with many of the problems relating to incontinence and impotence linked in the past to such surgeries.

"Our number one priority is to get rid of the cancer. Then we look at helping the patient maintain continence and potency with tools such as biofeedback and Kegel exercises," he explained.

Because Love was between insurances, his treatment was provided free of charge.

"We are one of the biggest urology centers in the state; it is only right that help those in real need who have no insurance," Moody

said.

Moody also praised the staff of the Butler County Health Department for the big role they played in the screening that saved a life.

"Ziba Anderson and their nurses worked with us that Saturday to screen all those men, and we are very appreciative of all they did," Moody said.

The national average for such prostate cancer screenings is 10 percent abnormalities; the Black Belt is 13 percent. However, results from the Butler County screening indicated a very high 21 percent rate of abnormalities. According to Moody, prostate cancer is more prevalent in African-American men (one in four African-Americans versus one in six Caucasians) and is often more deadly.

"That is why it is vital men starting at age 40 get their screenings. It really can mean the difference between life and death," the doctor said.

Love, a resident of Camden, is now a firm believer in regular prostate screenings for men - so much so he rounded up a few friends and took them to a recent screening held by UCA in Wilcox County.

"Guys like Mr. Love are our best salespeople in getting the message out to the public, 'Hey, we need to do this, too,'" said Moody.

"If I hadn't went, who knows what would have happened. I just thank the Lord I found out," Love said.