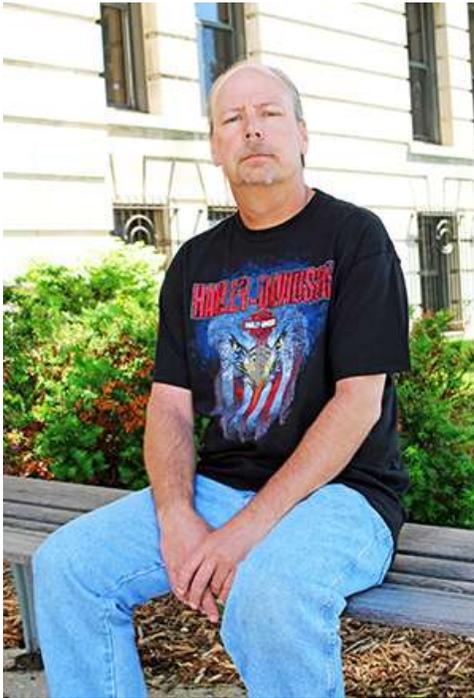


## Being There – St. Ben's Clinic Helped Anthony Hannon Fight Cancer and Homelessness



When Anthony first discovered the lump in his neck, he faced the same decision that many people do when confronted with a strange, new ailment. Is it something that can be ignored until it just goes away on its own? Or is it something serious, requiring an immediate trip to the doctor?

That decision is that much harder, however, when you're living in a homeless shelter.

At the time, Anthony was living at the Rescue Mission Shelter in downtown Milwaukee. Fortunately, he was there when Ellen Krueger, the Outreach Nurse for Columbia St. Mary's St. Ben's Clinic, was doing one of her bi-monthly screening and health counseling sessions.

After examining the lump on his neck, Ellen was concerned and asked Anthony to come to St. Ben's Clinic for further evaluation. There, Anthony met with Sara Zirbel, a Nurse Practitioner, who was similarly worried and referred him to Dr. Gretchen Durkin, an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist.

Dr. Durkin returned with the diagnosis: cancer.

Although he was without financial support – diagnostic testing was funded through the Specialty Access for Uninsured Program (SAUP), a form of financial assistance charity care at Columbia St. Mary's – Anthony had the courage to forge ahead through treatment planning and implementation.

The first step of his treatment was to visit a dentist to ensure his teeth and gums were healthy enough for the radiation treatment of his neck. It was at this time Anthony decided to call his father, from whom he had been estranged, and ask if he could stop by to tell him about his health problems. After hearing about Anthony's cancer, his father did not want him going through treatment while living in a shelter and asked him to move in with him.

With the renewed support of his father, Anthony made his way through the 35 radiation treatments and two rounds of chemotherapy. His stress over treatment costs was relieved when the St. Ben's Clinic social worker referred him to a Columbia St. Mary's financial counselor for help in applying for Medical Assistance. They were successful in the application and Anthony did receive Medical Assistance for his ongoing care.

Today, Anthony feels blessed, not only for the life-saving care he received, but also for the reconciliation with his father.

"This was all through the grace of God. It was like a miracle," Anthony says. "I haven't earned any of this. It was all through God's mercy."

For their part, the St. Ben's Clinic staff is thankful they could be there and be part of God's plan for Anthony.