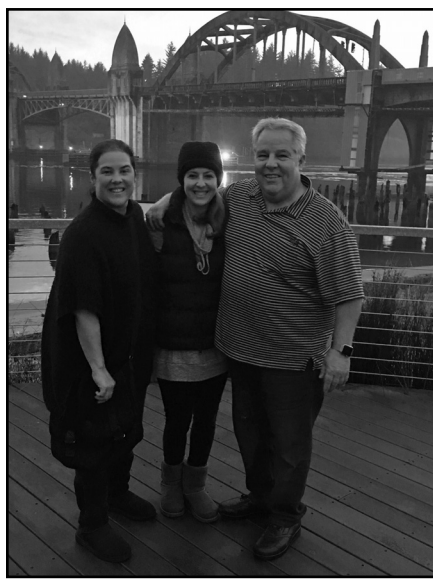


# Us TOO FLORENCE — My PROSTATE CANCER JOURNEY (PART I)

By HENRY AZEVEDO  
Prostate Cancer Survivor  
Special to Siuslaw News

This is the first "Behind the Headlines" story of the multiple-part journey of Henry Azevedo and his children. As readers will find out, Henry had aggressive prostate cancer and tested positive for BRCA2 gene mutation. His daughters also tested positive for the same mutation, which led to preventive surgeries due to the very high risk for breast and ovarian cancers. His son is just now undergoing genetic testing to see if he has the same mutation.



My elevated risk for a journey with prostate cancer was likely present at birth. I will get to that later. At age 61, I went in for a routine physical in early 2012. My lab work indicated that my PSA was 3.9, barely below the 4.0 that is top of the "normal" range. I didn't have a clue what that meant and apparently neither did my primary care doctor. My next physical was about 18 months later (9/24/2013) with a new doctor in Eugene. A few days later, I got a call from the doctor indicating my PSA was 12.34. Because of that nearly 8.5 jump in my PSA in 18 months, he felt that I definitely had prostate cancer. He referred me to urologists at Oregon Urology Institute (OUI) who would be able to make a definite diagnosis. I met Dr. Kollmorgen, who immediately began a series of preliminary tests including the dreaded finger maneuver — digital rectal exam

— and urine samples. The urine sample found traces of blood. On 10/25/2013, Kollmorgen biopsied my prostate, which involved taking eight needle samples of tissue. The result was a Gleason Score of 8 (4+4), which basically meant that I had an aggressive form of prostate cancer. Based on these results and in consultation with Kollmorgen, he immediately scheduled surgery on 11/20/2013 to have my prostate removed. Following surgery, the bad news from the pathologist was that I had positive margins, meaning the cancer had moved outside the prostate gland and attached itself to adjoining tissue. The good news was that no cancer was found in my lymph nodes.

On 2/14/2014, two small gold pins (fiducials) were placed in the area of my prostate bed. These pins provided markers for the radiation technicians to guide the radiation to the specific area needing it, sparing nearby tissue from damage. For the radiation, I rode the "Friends of Florence" bus from Mapleton to Eugene for six weeks Monday through Friday. The bus was a

great help. I met a few men who rode with me and we became good friends. Sharing our common experience was very helpful. In addition to the radiation, I received a Lupron shot to lower my testosterone and an Xgeva shot to maintain bone health. This Lupron shot is repeated in six-month intervals, the Xgeva in two-month intervals. After a few months my PSA began to rise. This was not good news following both surgery and radiation. On 6/14/2015, I noticed some blood in my urine. By the next morning I found that although I had a strong urge to urinate nothing would come out. I was totally blocked. And then the pain became unbearable. I called the OUI and they suggested I go to the hospital in Eugene. By the time my wife drove me to the hospital in Eugene the pain was excruciating. The hospital staff tried inserting five different catheters during the course of about six hours to no avail. I had earlier been given

an intravenous drip with pain medicine. The pain persisted and I asked for morphine. They said the medication I was receiving was stronger than morphine. Finally, a member of the OUI staff arrived and she managed to insert a reaming device and a catheter. The relief was immediate, and I went home with the catheter for about a week. Shortly thereafter, Kollmorgen performed a cystourethroscopy w/ dilation to determine what was going on with my bladder. I told him I was curious why this was happening now, months after my surgery. He explained that during the healing process scar tissue is formed. As veins do much better with soft tissue, they are more susceptible to rupture when they grow over the scar tissue. He cleaned the area up and told me if this continued, I would need to spend time in the hyperbaric oxygen chamber to oxygenate the area and provide a better environment for the veins to grow. No recurrence after 4 years. Now, back to that rising PSA!



CPT. PETE "BOA" WARREN  
Special to Siuslaw News

## SVFR — MUTUAL BENEFITS FROM HAVING FIREFIGHTERS WORK FOR YOU

who are still working where'd I just left. A pair of them are the mighty Quinn brothers. While not identical — you'd have a difficult time seeing any resemblance — both took the Firefighter Academy together and became active volunteers a few years back. Younger brother David resides up north and responds out of Station 4. He's recently completed most of the training for his Engineer/Pumper Operator certification. This year, he was finally able to outdo his brother on the agility testing. This was no easy task either, as Don is fast through the course. Not to be outdone, Firefighter/EMT Don is a resident at the Main Station. He's been residing in-house for

over two years. Due to being at the station, he's one of our top responders. Recently, he upgraded his certification to Firefighter 2. Utilizing the skills he has learned allowed him to change professions and he's now working at PeaceHealth. Both brothers worked or are still working at Fred Meyer here in Florence. By giving time off and allowing many of their constituents to volunteer with the department, we are a stronger and healthier community for both the business and/or customer who may directly benefit from having trained individuals on hand. How has that helped a store like Fred Meyer? One patron owes their renewed quality of life to an on-hand employee. In a re-

cent incident, EMT Firefighter Sky Cedar-Leaf quickly responded to a person in distress. Sky recognized the problem and ramifications. With his early treatment, there was a very successful outcome. Another employee is newly certified EMT Firefighter Tommy Van Winkle, who you'll usually find in the Electronics section of the store. So, if that new 65-inch OLAN Mega pixel television's price stops you in your tracks, either Tommy or one of our other trained personnel will be helping with CPR.



In September, Siuslaw Valley Firefighters participated in the Portland Climb for the Cure. Among them was Don Quinn, Kyle Orozco, Conway Pebley, Riley Hayes and Colton Griswold.

The cavalry of both Western Lane and Siuslaw Valley Firefighters will be right behind. The next Firefighter Academy starts in March. Call 541-997-3212 or visit svfr.org now to get information about it. Check it out!

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