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Dundalk couple get behind new support group for cancer

WEBSITE WILL ALLOW PETER CAROLAN TO CONTACT FELLOW NET PATIENTS

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By OLIVIA RYAN
Wednesday November 28 2012

A DUNDALK couple have joined a new national support group for people dealing with the rare form of cancer known as Neuroendocrine Tumours (NET).

The NET Patient Network was launched on Worldwide NET Cancer Awareness Day, which took place last week in the Trinity College Biomedical Sciences Institute and one of the main organisers is RTE's Northern Editor Tommie Gorman, who has lived with with the rare form of cancer for the last 20 years.

Peter and Evelyn Carolan from Heynestown joined the network after Peter was diagnosed with NET two years ago.

Peter said: 'In my case, I was diagnosed with a FHN (non-malignant, melon-sized) tumour on my liver in October 2010. I went to a private clinic to get my heart checked out at first, as I was quickly losing most of my energy. The tests lasted a number of months and I was referred to a rheumatologist and my GP advised me to get a second opinion from a very thorough, partly-retired consultant in this county.

'On my second visit to him, he advised me that if I didn't get my heart, and the problem that was causing the trouble, seen to, I would need a heart transplant within a year. This was



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'On my second visit to him, he advised me that if I didn't get my heart, and the problem that was causing the trouble, seen to, I would need a heart transplant within a year. This was only a month after being told there was nothing wrong with my heart. Two months after that, I was told I had a NET carcinoid and I was put on palliative care treatments as the cancer at that stage had spread to numerous parts of my body and operations and chemo were not options'.

After this shocking diagnosis, Peter, with the support of his wife, three daughters, relatives, doctors, friends, neighbours, colleagues and clergy he 'made it through the year'. He said: 'The palliative care seems to be working and perhaps, as I'm now much stronger mentally and physically I may be able to get treatment abroad.

'The website will enable me to contact other Irish patients that had treatments abroad so I can make an informed decision. A motto for patients like me is: 'Die with it, rather than because of it' and I intend to try'.

Peter also praised the work of Tommie Gorman in helping to highlight the illness in Ireland and the Dundalk man hopes that by making people aware of this cancer, which accounts for around two per cent of all cancers in Ireland, 'that people who are not getting credible answers about their diagnosis will insist on getting different opinions'.

For more information and support, visit www.NETPatientNetwork.ie.

- OLIVIA RYAN



Susan Lynch, Evelyn Carolan, Dr. Derek Power and Peter Carolan at the launch of the NET Patient Network in Trinity College last week.

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