

Dr. Zachary Klaassen: We can talk as providers and physicians all we want, but to hear from people who have been through this, like many on the line, have...Welcome again. And thank you both for your time and for your invaluable counseling and experience and just sharing your experience. So I'm going to give each of you a moment to introduce yourself. I'll maybe start with Tom. Go ahead.

Mr. Tom Hulseley: Well, thank you, Dr. Klaassen and Becky and the PCF for this opportunity today to share a little bit about my story.

It's my honor to, be here today. You know, I heard the words you never want to hear on my birthday in 2015. You have prostate cancer. I felt every negative emotion one could imagine that day, including fear, angst, embarrassment. Why me? And compounding my angst was the fact I had just witnessed my best friend lose his life to prostate cancer.

It was a four-year battle, and it was absolutely, gut wrenching. So, like many men, I kept it bottled up inside. I did not want to talk about a health issue that was below the belt. And so I really took my journey almost alone because the stigma was very real for me for having prostate cancer. And really, my support system that I had, it was just, you know, built for family members and a couple of close, close friends.

But none of them had actually been through prostate cancer. So I did not talk about my prostate cancer or open up about it for over a year. But with my wife's encouragement, I wrote a blog about my prostate cancer journey. And for me, it was so therapeutic. And along the way, I found myself...my blog was just giving other men hope and inspiration, and it was also at this point that I found ZERO prostate cancer, found my purpose, and subsequently dedicated my life to helping others and other people facing life, challenging obstacles.

Looking back, I realized, was one significant difference between my friend and I regarding our prostate cancer diagnosis. And that was early detection. Mine was—I was very proactive and caught mine early. Unfortunately, my friend had progressed and metastasized. Also, just last thing I'd like to say is, this change in mindset that I had, with that change in mindset, I set goals to get beyond those dark days.

And one of those goals was to be around to walk my daughter down the aisle and I achieved that goal. So I'm very, very grateful for that. And really, in a nutshell, Dr. Klaassen this—that's my prostate cancer story.

Dr. Zachary Klaassen: Outstanding. Thank you so much, Tom. We're delighted to have you. And Mr. Anthony Mack. Please introduce yourself as well.

Mr. Anthony Mack: Thank you so much, Dr. Klaassen. Thank you so much, Gina Carithers, who heads up Prostate Cancer Foundation. And thank the Foundation and the entire team, all the staff, for what you do in terms of just being a resource for individuals like Tom and myself that have gone through prostate cancer, going through it now. It's so, so needed.

But my name is Anthony Mack, originally I was born in Oxnard, California. I refer to it as a strawberry patch in Southern California. I'm a proud father of three amazing young adults. The youngest is—my daughter's 22 years old, middle son is, 24, and the oldest son is 26. And I consider myself a unicorn, kind of in this prostate cancer journey. If I can kind of paraphrase that, I was very fortunate and mine was caught frankly, while I was a young man. If I remember, if my numbers are correct, I believe I was 41 years old when they—when I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, and I phrased that I was—I'm kind of the unicorn in the room because fortunately, and unfortunately, but my father, who is now no longer with us, he had been diagnosed with prostate cancer before me. And so, it was my father, there, really, you know, saved my life because of his diagnosis, and my involvement as his one and only son that I actually traveled in, you know, through his journey, through his experience, which really just kind of jumpstarted me to get proactive and to begin looking into my prostate health.

I started at the early age of 35, getting checked, you know, early checkups. And it was because of those checkups that they detected the prostate cancer...in my gland. And fortunately, they caught it early enough and went through the, you know, prostatectomy, procedure and, you know, knock on wood, today with follow-up checkups, I get checked... you know, frequently each year, it has been under control.

But through the journey, I'll tell you, Dr. Klaassen, it was a very shocking journey. I never envisioned that I would be a prostate cancer candidate. I lived, I thought, a relatively healthy life. I eat pretty healthy, I always have, I've always stayed in shape, you know, a long-distance runner,

You know, never—not into drugs, ...you know, heavy drinking... maybe propose a toast to Thanksgiving, New Year's Eve. But other than that, just a normal, you know, life. And to hear that “C-word.” I still, to this day, I can recall exactly where I was. Who was in the room. It was just, it was a shell shock. And, I'll tell you, if it wasn't for the support system around me, which was, when I was—through faith, frankly, my church, church family. And then

number two, thank God, you know, I have had the support of a loving family, you know, my parents and my wife at the time, my kids, as Tom mentioned, you know, I—it was my young adults. At that time, they were six, four and two. And all I could think was, I've got to be around to see my kids, you know, graduate from college and go on to live great, productive lives and, you know, contribute to society. But the family was very much, important, my personal family and my Cedars-Sinai family, you know, and thank God for Dr. Stuart Holden, who was my surgeon, who, he, along with Dr. Edwin Posadas, they really jumped on this very aggressively. We sat down and really laid out a plan, and that made sense, for my life. So where I was, thank God, at that time, I already had all the children that, you know, my wife and I that we wanted to have at that time. So I didn't have to worry about that piece.

It's just a matter of, you know, how do we approach this? And, so it was...it's been quite a journey. And I'm just grateful to be here today to share that experience with the audience today. Thank you very much.

Dr. Zachary Klaassen: Yeah, thank you. That's outstanding and well laid out by both of you. And Dr. Holden is certainly, probably the most important urologist in the PCF. He's been with PCF for, I think, all 30 plus years. And so, you had a good surgeon as well. So, I want to delve into a couple important topics. I'm going to start with Tom about cardiovascular health and fitness, as we know, as men in the US, it's the most common cause of mortality and even the most common cause of mortality, cardiovascular death among men with localized prostate cancer.

So I certainly talk a lot with my patients about fitness and cardiovascular health. I know, Tom, you've had some cardiovascular issues after the prostate cancer diagnosis, maybe not even related to the treatment and whatnot, but you're very fit. You do a lot of Iron Man. Just talk to us about the importance as a prostate cancer survivor in that aspect.

Mr. Tom Hulsey: Well, two years after my prostate—the prostate cancer diagnosis, I was diagnosed with clinically severe coronary artery disease and subsequently severe carotid artery stenosis. And as you just said, Dr. Klaassen, cardiovascular disease is a major cause of mortality in men with localized and metastatic prostate cancer. And it's really the biggest killer of men and women in the world.

But anyway, I've always been an advocate for a healthy lifestyle. Fitness, both physical and mental, have been very important to me. Physical fitness is a huge factor in cancer recovery and exercise is not only shown to increase the cancer survivors' well-being, but it also has

proven to be one of the most useful treatments in cancer-related side effects, including fatigue.

And a strong body can really help overcome many physical obstacles. And I feel like I'm proof of that. But in our society, a healthy lifestyle requires commitment. And that's really a real challenge. I know, especially for a lot of people. But again, to your point, though, cardiovascular disease has been a big part of my life too.

Dr. Zachary Klaassen: Absolutely. No, that's a great message. And, Anthony, I want to talk to you. You mentioned in your opening remarks, which were very, very well said, about family history and that really saved your life. So just talk about not just the importance of understanding your family history, asking your provider about when we should start screening, but also the overall aspect of screening among African American men.

Mr. Anthony Mack: Yes. Thank you, Dr. Klaassen. You know that family history, knowing your family medical history is so critically important and shockingly, well, it's not shockingly, you know, those of us that are really attuned with what's the origin of history culturally, but that can many—I mean, it's easy for us to roll, you know, our medical history off of our tongue as we sit here today.

But it can get pretty complicated. I'll use my family history, for example. So, my mother, her and her twin brother, at birth, my biological grandmother, their mother's biological grandmother. She lost her life while giving birth to the twins. That was my mom and her twin brother. and at that time, my biological grandfather. at that time...they were kids number ten and eleven.

Dr. Zachary Klaassen: Wow.

Mr. Anthony Mack: And so he couldn't, you know, he couldn't afford it. You can imagine way back then, hard-working man, but he's only making so much per week. So he wound up having to put my mother and her twin brother up into foster care.

Fortunately, at the age of two, they were adopted together and for years raised by their adopted mother, which is my adopted grandmother. So my mother, who's no longer with us, you know, rest her soul. It was probably about 20 years ago. She got the courage to do the deep digging and to hire a case manager to dig into her file, her personal file, which is back in Atlanta, Georgia.

And, so we learned about our true blood family, my mother's side and my father's side family. Anyone that knows my father, he's a very driven man. Hardworking man, committed to making a difference in the lives of many individuals from the underserved communities throughout the country. And he just was a hard worker, you know, work hard first.

I'll get a check-up later down the road. Just old school traditionally. And so, really getting, information regarding medical history out of his mouth, that was typically wasn't what we discussed until he became a prostate cancer victim. But I say all that to say that knowing our medical history is so critically important.

And it was because of that that years later, my mother was driven to hire a caseworker to open up medical files because after what we went through with my father, it just dawned on our entire family how critically important it is to understand and to know your medical history. Even after my father had been diagnosed and had gone through the surgery, I did not, you know, start getting checked up until about two years after when we were doing PSAs and getting involved to spread the word.

And it just dawned on me one day that, you know what? I really, really need to dig into this. I'm kind of being a hypocrite. I'm preaching one thing, but I'm really not digging into this for personal well-being. And I have at home two young boys, so here we have—you have three generations, right?

We have my father, then we have myself. And now I've got my young boys. And, so we've got, I think, you know, well, my wife's back. Then she and I were talking, you know, once I got through this, this is an opportunity for me to stay as closely as possible, engage with Cedars-Sinai hospital and whatever I can do to go in voluntarily so that we can continue to do checkups to hopefully help the next generation of, you know, Afro-American men, frankly, that we all know within the African-American community, prostate cancer, unfortunately, is very prominent.

And to spread the word about getting to not only just getting tested and getting checked, but to dig into your family history and find out just how prevalent is this dreaded disease in your family and take action.

Dr. Zachary Klaassen: Well said, I wish we had another hour to speak to both of you. I want to give you 30 seconds.

And thank you for your hope that you provided people on the line. 30 seconds each just to sort of summarize any final thoughts. Tom, I'll start with you.

Mr. Tom Hulsey: Okay. thank you, Dr. Klaassen. I have, I guess, two comments I'd like to make. When I went to my cardiologist complaining of a pain in my chest, he dismissed my concerns.

He was looking at this guy that was, you know, very fit and all, but not satisfied. I knew something was wrong. I sought out a second opinion, and if it wasn't for that second opinion, I wouldn't be sitting here, right now. Because, as I mentioned earlier, I was diagnosed with cardiovascular disease. So my message is, if you feel like you're not comfortable with the answer you're getting, get a second or even a third opinion, and getting that second opinion may increase your trust in your—in the care plan you do have outlined in front of you. And then lastly, I'd like to highlight great, wonderful patient resources. And this is one that Becky mentioned at the beginning of the webinar. And that is the prostate cancer patient voices website. it's for patients by patients. And this is—there's a wealth of information out there for prostate cancer patients and their families.

And I believe Becky's going to put that in the chat, the link for that. And again, thank you. Thank you for the opportunity to Dr. Klaassen.

Dr. Zachary Klaassen: Thank you so much, Tom. Mr. Mack, you have the final word. Thank you very much, both for your time.

Mr. Anthony Mack: Well thank you, Dr. Klaassen. You know, I think the thing that jumps out, and we were going to, you know—this would be a whole new session to touch on this, and that is the mental health challenge. I think, it's a frankly—it's a travesty, that in our country, less than 5% of the therapists, psychologists, deal with mental health, the impact of that behind dealing with just making the day-to-day, let alone getting the message that you have, you know, you have cancer.

I think it's a travesty that with the resource that our country has in the—and the resources that our different organizations have, that we're not doing more to graduate more psychologists or practitioners on an annual basis. Less than 5% in this country total, practitioners are African-American, and just from the underserved communities in general.

So...don't hold this inside. If you're out there, you notice that you have some symptoms that are abnormal. You know, don't fall prey to the weakness of the mental health and those

voices in your mind. Seek help, speak to someone, speak to that loved one. Speak to your doctor. The next time you speak to your doctor, it's okay to say something because as Dr. Klaassen will share with you, unfortunately, God willing you live long enough, for men, prostate cancer, it's not uncommon. It happens. And the sooner you speak up and you seek help, then the greater your odds of surviving this dreadful disease. And thank you for having me on as a guest today. It's been an honor.

Mr. Tom Hulsey: Dr. Klaassen, may I add on to that real quick?

Dr. Zachary Klaassen: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Tom Hulsey: Just to what Anthony said, you know, a cancer diagnosis is—can be very isolating and overwhelming. And I was there, and the lesson learned is just what Anthony said, seek help such as a support group. Talk about it. And that's something that I, again, I have a lot of lessons learned for me in my journey, but that is definitely a big one.

Dr. Zachary Klaassen: Yeah. Excellent. And again, thank you, guys...appreciate you being here. It's been really special to have this discussion.

Mr. Anthony Mack: Thank you.

Mr. Tom Hulsey: Thank you.