

New hope for kidney patients

KEVIN CONNOR
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Drug recently approved by Health Canada

Jeff Katz believes a new drug approved by Health Canada will keep his advanced kidney cancer from progressing.

"I'm really optimistic this drug (Afinitor) will help me manage my terminal stage-four kidney cancer. It is not a cure but it will keep the tumour stable. Tumours just

want to grow, but now I have options for a longer life," said Katz, 66, who was diagnosed in 1998.

Kidneys, part of the urinary tract, remove waste and excess water from the blood, control red blood cell production and regulate blood pressure.

Research has shown that

Afinitor more than doubled the time without tumour growth or death in patients with advanced cases of kidney cancer.

Katz — who was in a clinical study for the drug — hopes the province will cover the costs of Afinitor.

"Forty-six thousand Canadians are diagnosed with kid-

ney cancer a year and 16,000 will die. I know kidney cancer isn't as high profile as prostate or breast cancer, but we need access to life-improving drugs," Katz said.

Kidney Cancer Canada has been battling for better access to drugs for kidney cancer patients across the country.

Deborah Maskens, vice-

chairman of Kidney Cancer Canada, said there are so few drugs approved by the provinces that once a medication stops working, patients have few options.

"Afinitor is an important new option for sequential treatment, and brings new hope to those Canadians living with kidney cancer," said Maskens.



DEBORAH MASKENS
"Important new option"

kevin.connor@sunmedia.ca