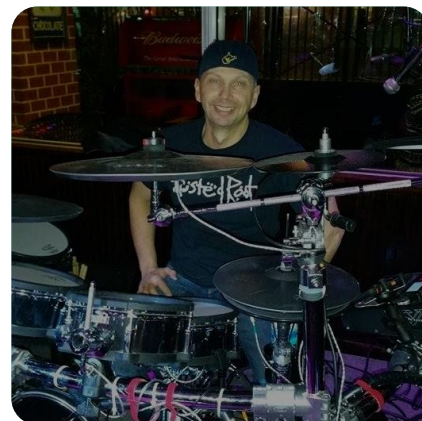


FACES OF AMR PROFILE STORIES

Duane Ferguson

Canyon Lake, Texas



“I thought, he is healthy and fit, he’s strong enough to fight this infection, still not fully understanding the MRSA part of it, until it was too late.”
– Duane’s widow, Shari

When Shari Ferguson’s husband, Duane, was suddenly diagnosed with leukemia, they immediately met with healthcare specialists to take on the disease. The diagnosis was upsetting but they felt Duane would get through it. He was generally healthy and only 60 years old.

Nothing prepared them, however, for the devastating shock that came with the quickness of his infection related death following organ failure and ultimate sepsis while battling the aggressive cancer.

Duane initially started feeling unwell at the end of September 2022. Normally active, he was very tired but attributed it to an especially heavy work load that month. Doctors diagnosed a sinus infection and prescribed antibiotics; Duane started feeling better. Around Thanksgiving 2022, while out of the country for work, Duane again felt unwell – similar to flu symptoms but with extreme exhaustion. After some blood work, doctors discovered that his red and white blood cell counts were low and recommended that he get back to the United States for a transfusion and treatment.

After receiving a transfusion in one hospital, Duane was transported to a larger hospital with more oncology resources. The line that was used for the transfusion was left in Duane’s arm during transport in case it was needed again. Once at the larger hospital, Duane received an official diagnosis of leukemia, but he also developed a fever that wouldn’t subside. Providers suspected he had contracted MRSA, a type of bacteria that is resistant to several antibiotics and can lead to sepsis, which is the body’s response to an infection that can lead to organ failure, tissue damage and death.

While delaying the start of chemotherapy, healthcare providers worked hard to fight the infection, which was difficult since his blood cell counts were so low. Breathing difficulties sent him to the ICU, but soon after, his lungs start to bleed a little, then a lot, and the bleeding would not stop. Unfortunately, Duane’s organs began shutting down and, within 10 days of his official cancer diagnosis, Duane passed away.

For Shari, the quickness of the onset of the infection that ultimately took her husband’s life was a complete shock. Had Duane’s infection been diagnosed earlier, before his blood counts had dipped so low perhaps the outcome could have been different. Now she wants to raise awareness of the serious risks of infections, especially for those battling other illnesses, like cancer, who are more vulnerable to infection both in and outside of healthcare facilities.



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