Let’s hear a round of applause for the front line workers

April 6, 2015 By Grace Campbell

One thing that has become increasingly apparent as I have traversed this landscape is the importance of a good team around you.

In this post I’d like to do a shout out to all the nurses, doctors and other support staff that help us.

Key to a good team is trust. You have to trust that they have your best interests at heart. They have to trust that you will uphold your side of the bargain: take your meds, do your tests, keep your appointments. A good team has members that are supportive. They are prepared to allow other members to question decisions and examine options.

Often the first person anyone thinks of when they think of a health care team is the doctor or specialist.

I remember how I came to find John*, a person I am now lucky to call my specialist.

I was about to look into flying overseas to access treatment when someone very wise said “Exhaust all your options at home”. So I started searching online for someone who seemed to be ahead of the curve. I emailed John at 10:30pm one weeknight and by 7:30am the next morning there was an email from him asking me to come down to Sydney to discuss options. This guy was a professor. He was involved in so many things: trials, research, advocacy, teaching … to think he’d take the time to personally respond to a stranger was mindblowing.

He has been unfailingly helpful and has advocated strongly for me. He has advocated for people with HCV who live outside the major metropolitan areas, recognising an often inequitable city/country divide. My entire family think the guy is some sort of rock star.

It’s my belief though, that often the unsung heroes of our fight with this illness are the nurses that deal with patients on a day to day basis. I see a Clinical Nurse Consultant, Lianne*. I see her every time I travel down. She never makes me feel stupid for asking dumb questions. She has her finger on the pulse, her sights set on a cure for everyone in her care. It’s Lianne who answers my panicked questions via email. It’s Lianne on the other end of the phone to organise schedules, check up on blood tests or make a proactive “how are you feeling” call.

They aren’t the only ones though. Think about the people who have all helped: the pathologists who drain us of our life’s blood, the pharmacists who dispense the drugs, the admin staff who, let’s face it,

keep everyone organised and on task. And these are just the people we physically meet with. There are so many more. Like it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a multitude to kill this virus.

How can we let these people know how much we appreciate them? A box of chocolates goes a long way. So does a smile and a genuinely meant “thank you”. A card. A note.

Do you have to do it? No. But it might be appreciated.

“None of us are as smart as all of us.”

*Please note I have used pseudonyms for John and Lianne, as they are not aware I have written this post.

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