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No bike ride ever as grueling as this day...

The day starts with a 9:30am appointment for Kevin (my son, the one with the kidney issue) to see Kaiser's super-duper urologist in Hayward, for a second (or 3rd?) opinion. Or that was the plan.

In reality, the day started with a phone call from Kevin's new urologist in Santa Clara, checking up on him after the relatively-minor operation he had on Friday to figure out if, in fact, his issue was caused by a slight blockage of the body's plumbing exiting the kidney, or something else, something so mysterious that it can only be figured out by eliminating every single other possibility.

It appeared that his pain was diminished via the new (and painful) stent placed Friday, so we decided it was time to get things behind us as quickly as possible and implement plan b- a robotic surgery procedure that removes the narrowed tube and stitches it back together. The Dr. checks the schedule and discovers that someone's cancelled a procedure today so let's get moving. Great, we're off to see the Dr. in Hayward, meanwhile having three phone conversations with the surgical staff at Santa Clara setting things up. Er, how fast can we get down there? And that's while we're in the Hayward Drs office.

So far, kind of exciting, like things are really moving and today could be the day that God's hand came down on Kevin and said enough is enough, today we fix this poor kid once and for all. It sure seemed that way until... until we get checked into the surgical unit at Kaiser Santa Clara and meet the surgeon himself, and he was wondering just what the heck we were doing there because he really didn't see evidence in the various scans and symptoms that Kevin was presenting a surgically-curable situation. ???!!! We've been through a living nightmare the past 4 weeks, with this morning really being our first real glimmer of hope, and now this. Don't get me wrong, the surgeon was doing his job, expressing his own expertise in the manner. What was wrong was that a series of individuals working on Kevin don't, individually, have the talent to carry this thing through from diagnosis to implementing a solution. Well, that's not really a problem; some are going to be better at surgery and some better at looking at the big picture. What's wrong is that you can't get all these guys in the room at the same time and create a "team" solution that carries with it a conviction that this is the right thing to do.

Too bad real life isn't like the hospital shows on TV, where various Doctors and Surgeons meet together as a team and come up with a plan that represents the genius of something dramatically greater than any individual possibly could, and you get the charismatic leader who presents the options to the patient and it's obvious which to pick because one is full of hope & life and the other, well, it's TV so usually it's death, so maybe we don't want the full TV treatment for Kevin. :-)

So my wife's nearly (?)Â in tears, Kevin's severely distressed (he'd really like to see Dr. K), and I'm left to try and dispassionately pull everything together, if possible. Intuitively I feel that the surgery makes sense, and logically, even if the section of plumbing was OK, there still needed to be a look-see to check out other internal issues, so the procedure, to me, seemed inevitable. If it wasn't today, it was going to be soon, for no other reason than to rule out other possibilities.

Thankfully, our new Santa Clara urologist, Dr. K, was able to come in and talk with all of us, including the surgeon, and explain in a way that made sense why this should be done. But my goodness, this came after a delay of at least 45 minutes while we hashed out whether to go through with this or not. Talk about being all dressed up and no place to go? In the end Kevin went through with it, and now, 5 hours later, we await him waking up from the anesthesia, and get to tell him that he's got two or three days in this hospital to look forward to (we were originally thinking this was something he might go home tonight from, or at worst, tomorow???).

It would be great to report they found an obvious problem, grand or small, we don't care, something where you could say voila, all will be perfect shortly! Instead, we are told that there did in fact appear to be a slight narrowing of one of the tubes (previously referred to as "plumbing") exiting the kidney, and the surgeon actually called in Dr. K to look at it, and the two of them decided together that it made sense to remove the small section and splice things back together. We hope, we pray, that that was enough, that somehow that tiny little piece of the human body was responsible for so much pain and anxiety these past four weeks. Only the passage of time will tell, but we are truly hopeful.Â

Thank goodness my staff in Redwood City, including my daughter Becky, Burt who came in from retirement to help out, Don, Danny, Charlie, Patrick and Roger, are able to run things well without me. That's a big help in dealing with something like this. And yes, I realize it's especially hard on Becky, who would really like to be here with her brother. Thanks to all.

Â --Mike--