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Local woman who fought for cancer drug succumbs to the disease

LISA TALLYN
Staff Writer

Catherine Pytel, the Georgetown woman who had to fight for a cancer drug treatment to battle non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, succumbed to the disease last week.

Pytel, 54, died at William Osler Health Centre last Wednesday.

Earlier this year, out of desperation, Pytel's daughter Kim wrote and e-mailed anyone she could think of to try to get her mom a dose of Zevalin, a drug approved by Health Canada last year that is only funded for cancer patients in Quebec and British Columbia, but not Ontario.

The drug was Pytel's last hope, working like a smart bomb targeting tumour cells with radiation, and cost \$25,000 per dose.

But even after a compassionate sample of the drug was provided to Pytel, the family faced another hurdle— finding someone to administer it. She finally received the drug in a Montreal hospital after her plight received national media coverage. *The Independent & Free Press* featured a story on Pytel on May 17.

When her mother was finally given the drug, Kim worried that she may have received it too late and the family was angry and frustrated it wasn't approved in Ontario and they had to fight and wait so long to get it.

"I'm not a doctor," said Kim. "There's always going to be a question, what if she had got the drug sooner, if they didn't have all this red tape."

She said her mom told her she hoped her struggle with the disease and making the public aware of the issues would help future cancer patients get the care and access to cancer drugs without facing the problems she did.



CATHERINE PYTEL

Kim's hopeful the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act (Bill 102), which received third and final reading in the Ontario legislature last month, will help cancer patients get the drugs they need.

The act is to improve patient access to drugs through new conditional listings, exceptional access and rapid reviews of innovative drugs.

(Lisa Tallyn can be reached at ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)

Police Blotter

Trailer of tools stolen

Police are investigating the theft of a cargo trailer containing a large quantity of power tools from the parking lot at St. George's Anglican Church sometime late last Friday or early Saturday.

The tools are valued at \$11,000, and the white aluminum trailer, \$4,000.

The licence plate on the trailer is B6674R.

More tools stolen

Several power tools, valued at \$3,000, were taken from a garage/workshop at a Market St. home during a break and enter sometime early Monday morning.



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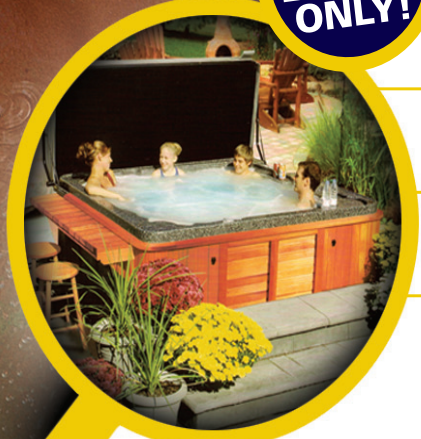
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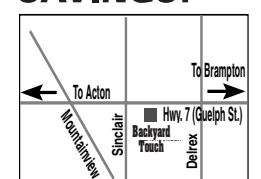
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