

Jessica Volenta shares her cancer journey

Like many people, Jessica Volenta was behind on her preventive health screenings, but didn't think that much about it. She was busy with home, family, and running her small business. When she received a letter from UPMC Health Plan telling her she was due for a mammogram, Pap screening, and a colonoscopy, she almost threw it in the recycling bin. But for some reason, she put it aside on the buffet where she keeps her bills.

There the flier sat, for about two months, until one day she decided she had to schedule at least one of the screenings. "I didn't have a gynecologist because my doctor had left the practice, and I hadn't found another one. But my dad had a gastroenterologist I really liked so I decided to schedule the colonoscopy with her."

Two weeks later she had the colonoscopy. Unfortunately, the doctor found a mass. And it was cancerous. Things moved very quickly after that, with imaging, lab work, and finally, surgery. The good news: the cancer had been caught early, and it had not spread. Jessica would not need chemo or radiation and could expect a full recovery.

It's been almost two months since Jessica had the surgery and she's back at work part-time and getting back to normal. "I'm so glad I got that screening, and that someone took the trouble to send me a letter with the screenings I needed. I think it saved my life."