



PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

Alayna was 2 years old when everything began. She started to experience frequent leg pain and mild fevers. We brought her to the doctors and they told us it was just growing pains. We decided to get a second opinion, so we brought her to the hospital. The results forever changed our lives. She was diagnosed with stage 4 Neuroblastoma.

Neuroblastoma is a cancer often found in the small glands on top of the kidneys. It can develop in the belly, chest, neck, pelvis and bones. Once we came to terms with Alaynas' diagnosis, we began fighting for her life. Along with the initial tumor that they found, they also told us her body was full of cancer. To

top it off, we were told that she had an ALK gene mutation which makes the cancer harder to get rid of.

The federal government has allocated a baffling 4% of government funding for cancer research in the United States, which is far from enough. This percentage needs to be increased to 8% for proper research. The signing of this petition will facilitate the lobbying and passing of a healthcare policy or law that allocates a higher percentage of national resources to childhood cancer research.

The treatments for childhood cancer are horrible and inhumane. The side effects that Alayna experienced while being treated, are what ultimately took her life. Some of these treatments cause other cancers and to me that is a huge problem. After her stem cell transplant, she had to have a colostomy bag due to developing C-diff. She also developed Thrombotic Microangiopathies also known as TMA, which causes the formation of microscopic blood clots in the capillaries and small arteries. She had to stop treatment until it subsided.

Once we started treatments again, everything was back on track and going well, until the TMA flared back up. After 2 more months of dealing with the side effects and TMA, Alayna's scans showed that her cancer had returned. Her body was too weak to start treatments back up and the prognosis was grim. My baby

spent 7 months straight in the hospital. We decided that it would be best to bring her home. A week later, Alayna passed away.

The emotional toll that something like this takes on a family and child fighting cancer, is indescribable. My daughter took anxiety meds everyday that she was here with us after her diagnosis. I continue to take anxiety and depression medication on a daily basis just to function, along with therapy two times a week every week. Nothing will ever be enough to take away the emptiness I feel without my baby here with me.

By signing this petition, you will be giving a voice to the children who were unable to live long enough to have their own. You will also be lobbying to help these children spend less time fighting and more time being the children they deserve to be. They should be spending less time in the hospital and more time being kids. We cannot do this alone, we need your help. Please stand with us on our fight to raise the percentage.

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