



PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

Calianna's ordeal was extremely difficult for everyone involved. She was only two at the time, so she did not understand what was wrong or why she felt the way that she did. But as her parents, there is no way to explain the overwhelming feeling of devastation we experienced. We also lived in constant fear for various reasons. One being that, things were not properly explained to us about our child's condition and we were terrified that any decision we made could be the wrong one. Most days we were physically ill due to all of the stress and pressure we were under. I was unable to eat or sleep during her fight and for months after her passing.

Calianna was diagnosed with Adrenocortical Carcinoma in April of 2014, after many abnormal difficulties children her age do not usually face. This is a very rare type of cancer in which malignant cells form in the outer layer of the adrenal gland. Each year an estimated 200 people are diagnosed with

Adrenocortical Carcinoma in the United States. It is estimated in 2022, over 15,600 children will be diagnosed with childhood cancer. Of that number, 1,780 children will die from the disease in the United States.

In the beginning we pleaded with doctors each time we brought her to the hospital, to run more tests. They always told us that there was nothing to worry about. After months of denying our requests, proper testing concluded our worst fears. Due to us not being taken seriously from the start, the cancer had spread to her lungs and treatment would need to start instantly if we wanted to give our daughter a chance at survival.

During treatment we lived at the hospital isolated from friends and family. If I had known in the beginning what the chemo would do to my daughter, I never would have put her through the pain and suffering she endured. Calianna was so sick from the treatments, she could not eat or drink and had no strength to even get out of bed without assistance. My daughter was petrified every time doctors and nurses would come into the room to administer her chemo, knowing what it would do to her. Once the treatments were over, we were told it did nothing for her and there was nothing else that could be done to save her. We were referred to children's hospice and sent home.

The last 6 months of Calianna's life were so full of hardships and I will never forget all that she went through before passing away. I had to watch her slip away slowly each day. Gaining so much weight in her belly from the swelling, she was unable to get comfortable. There was never any relief for her, from the pain that she endured. She cried all of the time because her belly always hurt and she wanted to be held, but it only made things worse for her when we did hold her. I will never forgive myself for not being able to do more for my girl.

Now more than ever we need your help, so children like Calianna will not have to suffer the way they currently do, with similar cancers like hers. By signing this petition, you will be giving a voice to the children who were unable to live long enough to be their own voice for change. We need to increase childhood cancer research funding from 4% to 8% so that our children, present and future, are spending less time in hospitals and more time being kids. We cannot do this alone, we need your help. Twelve million signatures are necessary to start the next phase of raising the percentage. Please stand with us in our fight.

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