



## PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

At 6 six years of age my son Colton was diagnosed with Pre-B Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. He relapsed in December of 2021, 11 months after his initial diagnosis. This has caused our family so many issues. When you watch your first born fight for his life knowing you could be doing more and knowing he is being treated with outdated medicine, it gives you such a passion that you want to let the masses hear your voice that these kids deserve better. According to the American Cancer Society, about 10,470 children in the United States will be diagnosed in 2022 with cancer under the age of 15.

Post-traumatic stress disorder, exhaustion, emotional and mental trauma are only part of what our family has gone through. I have anxiety about the cost of medications and not knowing what kind of side effects there may be. I also worry about how this will affect our entire family. The hardship and struggles are so hard to put into words. The treatments are barbaric; the chemo, radiation, car-t, and bone marrow transplants to name a few! It is so very hard to watch and listen to your child scream out in pain; whether it be from actual pain or anticipated pain and not be able to help them. My poor kid is traumatized. It is so hard to watch your child suffer from headaches all day and fevers off/on. The chemo drugs also effect his taste buds and nothing tastes right.

Colton gets high anxiety levels on hospital visit days. The mood swings from the steroid treatments worsen his anxiety. Colton gets little to no sleep. He has a lot of side pain due to the treatments. He wakes up feeling shaky with cramps and pain. The withdrawals from the steroids are insane, it causes nausea and vomiting. Tylenol does not even take the edge off for him to get rest. The steroids make him gain weight which adds to the stress of having to make time to buy new clothes, instead of being able to spend time with him.

When Colton was diagnosed, I had a four month old infant. I had to leave my job to become a full time caregiver and also move into a tiny apartment. My infant grew up surrounded by stress and no socialization. My now 8 year old is devastated because he will never have children. He will never be able to join the marines like most of the men in our family. The causes of DNA changes in most childhood cancers are not known and with this increased funding more research can be done to get answers. Knowing his life is shortened, he often talks about not wanting to live. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in children ages 1 to 14.

We should not have to stand up to doctors and put our foot down on the kind of care our child received. Our son should be able to trust doctors and the care he is receiving. Any child should receive better care than this. In signing this petition you are helping make a change to improve this care. Your signature is needed to raise federal funding for childhood cancer research from 4% to 8%. We need 12 million signatures behind this petition to begin lobbying for more consistent research. Please share with your community, loved ones, and friends. Together we can make a difference.

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