



PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

Harper Wagner was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma on January 24th, 2022, at the age of 6 years old. This is a type of sarcoma which effects soft tissue, connective tissue or bone. It usually begins in muscles that are attached to bones and that help the body move, but it may begin in many places in the body. It can occur throughout childhood and may be present at birth. The most common symptoms of rhabdomyosarcoma are persistent lump or swelling in the body that may be painful, headache, nausea, constipation, blood in urine and bulging of the eye or drooping eyelid. The 5-year survival rate for children who have low-risk ranges from 70%

to 80%. When the cancer becomes high-risk, spreading widely in the body, the 5-year survival rate ranges from 20% to 30%.

We began noticing that Harper had some unusual swelling behind and under her ear. We took her to see a doctor to have it looked at. An ultrasound and CT scan were done. Once the results came back, we were given the terrible news that our daughter had cancer. This news completely shocked us. Processing her diagnosis was extremely tough for all of us. You have many questions but are so terrified, that it is hard to even ask in fear of hearing the worst. Harper will be undergoing 66 weeks of chemotherapy. As of right now she has completed 5 and a half weeks of radiation. Aside from being hospitalized to have her port placed, she has been hospitalized an additional 4 times due to fever and her ANC (absolute neutrophil count) being low.

Every day, 42 families learn that their child has cancer. Roughly 10,470 children in the United States under the age of 15 will be diagnosed with cancer in 2022. About 1,050 children are expected to die of cancer in 2022. Cancer is the number one cause of death by disease for children in America. It is estimated that 1 out of 6 children with cancer in America do not survive 5 years. Despite advances in medicine, some types of cancer remain incurable. As of 2020, only 6 new drugs have been developed for childhood cancer. Globally, approximately 400,000 children are diagnosed with cancer each year. There are far too many children being affected by this ugly disease. It is crucial that we see the federal funding rise from 4% to 8%. This is also why my wife and I are so passionate about spreading awareness about childhood cancer.

Cancer does not care who it attacks. It comes at a high cost and is ruining the lives of so many children and their families. No child should ever have to fight to live. No parent should have to watch their child being poked and prodded, knowing there are no other choices. It is

heart breaking knowing there is nothing we can do to take our daughters pain and fear away. Our other children have suffered and struggle every time we have to leave to take Harper to her treatments. We never know if we will be gone a day, a week or longer. Harper has struggled with the loss of her hair and when she looks in a mirror, she cries because of how it has affected her appearance. She has lost socialization skills due to not being able to attend school regularly and struggles with isolation. Her mother and I have struggled financially because we are unable to work full time due to having to travel for her treatments. The price of gas, food and hotel stays alone cost us a lot of money. Sadly, we have no other options because there is nowhere closer to do treatments.

The federal government is allocating a baffling 4% for funding for childhood cancer research. This is not nearly enough funding to make a difference. By signing this petition, you will help facilitate lobbying and the advance of a healthcare policy that will reserve a higher percentage of resources for childhood cancer research. Essentially this will allow researchers more funding to possibly find a childhood cancer vaccine. A vaccine alone could lower the amount of time each child has to suffer the side effects of treatments. We are in need of 12 million signatures in order to advance to the next step in this process. Please stand with us by signing and sharing this petition so these children and their families can be heard.

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