



PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH

Whyatt was 4 years old when he was diagnosed with Pineoblastoma. This is a rare, aggressive type of cancer that begins in the cells of the brain's pineal gland. The pineal gland which is located in the center of your brain, produces a hormone (melatonin) that plays a role in your natural sleep-wake cycle. The cause of pineoblastoma is unknown, but specific inherited genetic variants in two genes, RB1 and DICER1 can increase the risk for a pineoblastoma. The overall 5-year survival rate for children with this form of cancer is about 60% to 65%.

This has not been an easy fight in the slightest. Whyatt has not been to school in over a year due to his cancer and compromised immune system. I had to quit my job to ensure that he is cared for 24 hours a day. We have been told by doctors that Whyatt will not survive. He has 2 cousins with whom he is very close, that are struggling with their emotions at the thought of him not beating this. They are angry and do not fully understand. How can I blame them though, I

feel the same way. He is only 7 years old and has a whole life ahead of him. He should not have to worry about dying.

Whyatt's journey began long before his cancer diagnosis, when he was diagnosed with DiGeorge Syndrome at birth. DiGeorge syndrome, is a syndrome caused by a microdeletion on the long arm of chromosome 22. While the symptoms can vary, Whyatt has a heart defect due to his DiGeorge Syndrome which caused 2 holes to form in his heart. Sometime after the cancer diagnosis, Whyatt developed Leptomeningeal disease. This occurs when cancer cells migrate from your breast, lung, or some other part of your body to your cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). This disease has a very low survival rate. With treatment, survival is about 3 to 6 months. The most common treatment for leptomeningeal disease is radiation therapy. There have been many trials and tribulations since this fight started. No matter what happens though, Whyatt is a fighter and we do not plan to quit.

Since Whyatt's diagnosis, I have found a group of other families who have or are currently enduring cancer within their own family. It is not a group that anyone wants to be a part of, but it is nice to have a place where we all understand what one another is going through. The mental and emotional pain is so much more than any of us can bear at times. I have cried oceans of tears for Whyatt and for so many others that have lost their lives to this horrible disease. It is time that something is done for our children. The chemo treatments alone are on a whole other level. The toxic drugs being pumped into our children's bodies. They are supposed to make children better, but these very treatments are the reason that he developed Leptomeningeal disease. All of the pain and suffering he has endured and all of these years of fighting, only to be given less than four months left with us.

Simple research from the National Cancer Institute on statistical data about childhood cancer paints a gruesome picture of how childhood cancer is the leading cause of death by disease past infancy among children in the United States. It has been formally estimated in 2022 that over 15,600 children will be diagnosed with childhood cancer, and 1,780 will die of the disease in the United States. By signing this petition, you will be taking a stand against the underfunding of childhood cancer research. The current funding percentage is 4%, which is not nearly enough. We need to raise that to at least 8% in order to facilitate more consistent research. In order to move to the next phase in reaching this goal, we need 12 million signatures. Please click the link below to sign the petition.

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