



PETITION TO INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER

According to the American Cancer Society, leukemia is the most common childhood cancer. Childhood acute lymphoblastic leukemia (also called ALL or acute lymphocytic leukemia) is a cancer of the blood and bone marrow. My son Harrison was diagnosed with SR – High B-cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia at 3 years old. “Acute” means that the leukemia can progress quickly, and if left untreated, would be fatal within a few months. B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia is a type of ALL that causes you to have immature white blood cells known as B-cell lymphoblasts, in your bloodstream and bone marrow. The risk for developing ALL is highest in children younger than 5 years of age. Harrison has been fighting for his life since May1, 2021.

I am so passionate about finding a cure for ALL because I do not want other families to go through what we have gone through. Our babies deserve a childhood that is filled with fun, growth, love and laughter; not pokes, tears, and pain. No parent should have to live without their child because of childhood cancer. We have been on an emotional rollercoaster since this all started. My son goes to therapy for anxiety and anger outbursts. Harrison is so young and does not understand why he has to go through so much pain and suffering. It is extremely hard to watch him endure all of this without being able to fix it or have any control over it. I have to hold down my screaming child for the nurses to access his port. Cancer in a pandemic is ridiculously difficult. Then finding out how little support we have is very disappointing.

When Harrison was diagnosed with cancer, it turned our whole world upside down. We have two younger siblings in the home and so much had to change. My mother moved in with us so she could watch Harrison's brothers while we were away at the hospital. My marriage has seen conflict as well. Cancer is not easy on families. I see other families fighting the same battle as us. I have watched other young children fight this battle and seen some of them lose. One of the other kids who was treated at the same hospital where Harrison is being treated, just lost her battle.

My son is young and his body is still growing. As the cells in his body are developing the cancer treatments can lead to late effects that show up years later. According to the American Cancer Society, younger children tend to be more sensitive to these effects. Cancer treatments for ALL, can also cause late effects on the brain. These effects can lead to cognitive impairments, causing learning disabilities. Harrison will continue with appointments long after his treatments are finished, to watch for these effects. At this time, we do not know how long that will be. All of these unknowns, add to the stress we face daily.

There needs to be a change in cancer treatments and that starts here with you. By signing this petition you are taking a stand to increase federal funding for childhood cancer research from 4 percent to 8 percent. There are 12 million signatures needed behind this petition to begin lobbying for this change. We are forever grateful for your support in taking this stand with us and for Harrison.

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