

**** Letter written by Maria Bunta on behalf of the Medical Director of the Northwestern Medicine Chicago Proton Center**

March 2018

Dear **Name(s)**,

Cancer is a daunting word — and a challenging illness . . . a very personal odyssey, to be sure.

But the right team, and the right support, can help to make a cancer diagnosis a little bit more manageable at a very difficult, and often overwhelming, time.

As a physician, I truly believe — and I have learned through personal experience — that health care is a team effort. At the Northwestern Medicine Chicago Proton Center, we are privileged to have a team of expert, compassionate nurses, radiation therapists, and physicians. Working together, we are able to deliver the highest quality of care and comfort to all our Proton Center patients and their families.

Through teamwork, we are able to achieve outstanding outcomes.

As someone familiar with the work of the Northwestern Medicine Chicago Proton Center for your own health care or for the care of a loved one, you understand the importance of a team approach. . . You know the power of togetherness, of uniting people — healthcare professionals, patients, and families — in a shared mission.

And our mission is to fight cancer with every tool we have!

Today, I am writing to ask you to share this spirit of togetherness with future patients of the Northwestern Medicine Chicago Proton Center by lending a helping hand to them.

Imagine how hard it would be if you couldn't pay for transportation to get to treatment. Imagine being unsure of how you will pay your bills at home after you have paid for a long hotel stay. Faced with such significant financial concerns, many people understandably experience stress, anxiety, and fear.

You can help to lift those burdens. And you can replace stress, anxiety, and fear with support, security, and hope.

Please join me in making a gift to the Proton Center Patient Assistance Fund. Created by caring individuals like you, this fund provides aid to Proton Center patients and families in financial need.

By making a gift to the fund, you will help to alleviate some of the financial concerns that many of our patients confront, and you will enable patients and their loved ones to direct all their energy toward treatment and recovery.

With your generous support, we will continue to make strides toward ensuring that **all** Proton Center patients have reliable transportation and a comfortable place to stay while they are receiving care.

Now I'd like to briefly tell you about one of our Proton Center patients who has received vital support from the Patient Assistance Fund. Generous people . . . **people like you**. . . have touched the lives of this man and his family.

This young man came to the Proton Center from out of state to be treated for medulloblastoma, a form of brain cancer that caused him to develop four tumors on the base of his brainstem. He and his wife were deeply concerned about both the diagnosis and the treatment process. They sought care and guidance from our Proton Center team, and we are honored that they made the choice to come to Northwestern Medicine.

And yet, the family's choice also produced some additional challenges. In order to receive treatment at the Proton Center, this young father needed to relocate from out of state to be closer to our facility. His wife was pregnant with their second child at the time, which necessitated her staying behind with their young son. As you can imagine, this decision was difficult and painful for the whole family, but they knew that the man needed the care he would receive at the Proton Center, and that the whole family soon would be reunited.

Due to his relocation to the Chicago area, the man had no choice but to put his job on hold. This significant change in the family's circumstances and day-to-day life caused a great financial strain. The patient and his wife didn't know where to turn . . . where they could find the trusted support that they and their family needed.

Thankfully, they could turn to us — and to the Proton Center Patient Assistance Fund.

With support from the fund, the man was able to stay in a comfortable place during his treatments. He felt safe and secure during a time of great stress and uncertainty, and, together, he and his family were able to focus on **healing**, rather than on the stress of financial burdens.

This story is **just one of many compelling stories** that speak to the the power of the Proton Center Patient Assistance Fund.

My colleagues and I give to this fund because we see how many lives it touches, and we want to be a part of something that truly makes a difference for those in need. Please join us in supporting the Proton Center Patient Assistance Fund. Together, we can ease others' burdens and lighten their loads, empowering them to fight cancer with all their strength.

Thank you so very much for your consideration and caring.

With gratitude,

Name of Physician

Medical Director, Northwestern Medicine Chicago Proton Center