



Masonic Cancer Center

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Comprehensive Cancer Center designated by the National Cancer Institute

Masonic Cancer Center Researcher Braves Dangerous Mountains for Kidney Cancer Awareness

Imagine climbing two of the highest, most dangerous and well recognized mountains in the Alps—Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn—to raise awareness for cancer. That is exactly the feat that was completed by a pair dedicated to kidney cancer.

Christopher Weight, MD, a kidney cancer surgeon and a Masonic Cancer Center, University of Minnesota researcher for the Screening, Prevention, Etiology and Cancer Survivorship (SPECS) program, and Donny Martin, a United Airlines pilot, travelled to Europe Aug. 9-27 to tackle the challenge.

“Donny was inspired to climb by his mother who was diagnosed with kidney cancer recently and had major surgery to treat the disease,” said Weight. “I climbed because I am inspired by my patients as I continue to tell their amazing stories and raise awareness for this underdog cancer.”

The 3-day climb required Weight and Martin to use specialized mountaineering equipment and sleep two nights on the mountain—which is taller than any mountain in the Continental United States by 1,000 feet. After one day of rest, the duo travelled to Italy to attempt to traverse the incomparable [Matterhorn](#)—climbing up the Italian side and coming down in Switzerland.

“It is estimated that more than 500 people have died trying to climb the Matterhorn in the past 150 years, and approximately 4,000 died trying to climb parts of Mont Blanc, making these two mountains some of the most dangerous mountains in the world,” Weight said.

Weight added that even though it’s claimed hundreds and thousands of lives, kidney cancer takes 76,000 lives of friends, mothers, children and loved ones each year, making the climb worth it.

“Climbing can be dangerous, but doing nothing to prevent death from kidney cancer is far, far, more dangerous,” he said.

Now, Weight is hosting an opportunity for others to show support and face their own fears—of heights, of endurance—during [Climb 4 Kidney Cancer](#)’s [Break the Bank](#) event Saturday, Sept. 17, 2016 at TCF Bank Stadium. Participants will scale as many stairs as they choose—up to 6,054—for those whose lives have been affected by kidney cancer.

“Fighting cancer is an uphill battle, just as climbing mountains—or stairs in this case—is,” said Weight. “This challenge and kidney cancer can be conquered. ‘Never’ is a word that should never be brought up in the fight against cancer.”

Weight is one of the board of directors and the co-founder of [Climb 4 Kidney Cancer](#), a division of Team8, a 501C nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness and funds for kidney cancer research through a combination of [stair climbing](#), [rock climbing](#) and [mountain climbing](#) events.