

From: [Diller, Lisa R., MD](#)
To: [Smith, Teryl A \(DPH\)](#); [DPH-DL - DoN Program](#)
Subject: DON for Proton Beam Facility: Pediatrician Perspective
Date: Friday, December 5, 2025 10:56:41 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

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Teryl Smith
Bureau Director for Health Care Safety and Quality
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

December 3, 2025

Dear Director Smith:

My name is Lisa Diller MD, and I am a pediatric oncologist practicing in Boston, Massachusetts. I am writing in strong support of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's proposal to establish a proton therapy center.

As a pediatric cancer doctor caring for infants and children with life-threatening tumors, I want to emphasize how vital it is to offer treatments that maximize the potential to cure while minimizing harm to surrounding tissue. This is particularly important for very young patients -- proton beam therapy has a much lower risk of causing harm to the developing brain, normal organs and growing tissue when compared to photon therapy.

Over my more than 30 years of practicing as a pediatric oncologist, I have cared for patients who are long-term survivors of photon therapy, and have noted how the 'exit dose' associated with photon radiation (and avoided with protons) has caused irrevocable harm to reproductive organs, to normal muscle and bone, and to parts of the brain. In the modern era of pediatric oncology, when we need to use radiation therapy to cure cancer, proton beam therapy is much preferred for most cases; children with retinoblastoma (a tumor of the retina, occurring in infants), rhabdomyosarcoma and brain tumors will live better lives after treatment due to improved long-term outcomes with proton therapy.

Massachusetts currently faces a significant unmet need for proton therapy. Currently there is only one operational proton beam site in New England, and even if the remaining (currently non-operational) machines were at full capacity, the need for proton therapy greatly outweighs the capacity. Because of those barriers, many patients experience delays or are unable to access this treatment. Others must leave their homes and their established oncology teams and travel to outside institutions, a disruption that complicates care coordination, increases risk, and places avoidable burdens on patients and families. This is especially true for the young families with children with cancer.

Dana-Farber's proposed proton therapy center will be an important advancement in regional cancer care. The center will be the first in the region to deliver proton therapy in a seated or inclined position, using a compact cyclotron system that lowers cost and reduces the footprint of proton therapy. This innovation has accelerated Dana-Farber's ability to bring the service online and will make this form of treatment more accessible to the patients who need it most.

The center will be located adjacent to other clinical and treatment spaces at Dana-Farber,

including the Jimmy Fund Clinic, allowing patients to move seamlessly between appointments and maintain full continuity with their care teams. With projected capacity for over 200 patients per year and up to 6,000 individual treatments, this center will meaningfully expand access for pediatric (and adult) patients not only at Dana-Farber but across the region.

Dana-Farber is committed to providing equitable, evidence-based care and preparing for what it means to treat cancer effectively over the next 10 to 20 years. This proton therapy center is a critical part of that mission.

I respectfully urge approval of this application so that Massachusetts patients can receive expanded access to state-of-the-art proton therapy. Please feel free to contact me to answer any questions or provide further information.

Sincerely,



Lisa Diller, MD

Lisa_diller@dfci.harvard.edu

Home address/other contact information:

Lisa Diller-Bloch



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December 6, 2025

Teryl Smith

Bureau Director for Health Care Safety and Quality
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

Dear Director Smith:

My name is Austin Sarat, and I am a resident of [REDACTED] Massachusetts. I am writing to express my strong support for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's proposed proton therapy center.

As a patient at Dana-Farber, I have experienced firsthand the expert, compassionate, and highly coordinated care that the Institute provides. I know how critical proton therapy treatment is for many cancer patients—particularly for pediatric patients whose developing bodies are especially vulnerable to radiation and those with tumors near vital organs.

The need for this treatment in our region is overwhelming. Right now, Massachusetts only has one operational proton beam, and many patients are forced to seek treatment elsewhere. This innovation makes it possible for more patients to receive treatment closer to home and have continuity in their care team. The new center will also serve patients receiving care at other hospitals across the region, allowing them to return to their home providers for follow-up.

Nearly every Massachusetts family has a story about someone whose life was touched by the incredible work being done at Dana-Farber. As cancer rates rise and the need for advanced treatments grow, this center will help ensure that patients have access to cutting-edge, equitable cancer care for decades.

I respectfully urge you to approve Dana-Farber's application so that more patients in the Commonwealth can benefit from life-saving and innovative proton therapy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Austin Sarat".

Austin Sarat

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

December 7, 2025

Teryl Smith
Bureau Director for Health Care Safety and Quality
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

Dear Director Smith:

My name is Judy Fine-Edelstein, and I reside in [REDACTED], Massachusetts. I am writing in strong support of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's application to establish a proton therapy center in Boston.

I am a cancer patient at Dana-Farber, as well as being a physician and a bioethicist. My father was also a cancer patient, treated with proton therapy in NJ. For many patients, especially children, proton therapy can offer the safest and most effective radiation option, because it targets the tumor with remarkable precision while protecting the healthy tissue around it. This can mean fewer long-term side effects and a better quality of life after treatment.

During my father's treatment, our family had to travel from his home in New York to New Jersey, living in a hotel for weeks at a time. Now, there is a proton center in Manhattan where patients can receive treatment. When my father was treated, many patients were going to this center in NJ from New England, because they could not obtain treatment here. I have seen how emotionally and physically overwhelming these journeys can be when patients and families have to travel outside of their home area.

We currently face the same issues here in Boston, preventing Dana-Farber patients from receiving this life-saving care. Right now, accessing proton therapy is extremely difficult for families. Massachusetts has only one proton beam, and appointments are limited. This requires families to take time off work, spend money on travel, and endure the stress of navigating care in multiple systems. Families often end up bouncing between doctors when they need proton therapy, which is especially hard on the most complex pediatric patients. If Dana-Farber's proton therapy center is approved, it would eliminate these hardships and improve continuity of care.

Additionally, Dana-Farber plans to treat not only its own patients, but also pediatric and adult patients referred from hospitals across the region, ensuring that families can access proton therapy while keeping the rest of their care close to home.

This project will reduce travel burdens, strengthen continuity of care, and ensure that patients receive advanced, evidence-based treatment in a single, coordinated setting. For families like mine, this would make a profound difference.

I respectfully urge approval of this application so that families across Massachusetts can access the proton therapy they need without unnecessary hardship.

Sincerely,

Judy Fine-Edelstein, MD, MS, Bioethics

From: [Shelly Plumb](#)
To: [Smith, Teryl A \(DPH\)](#); [DPH-DL - DoN Program](#)
Subject: Proton Therapy - DFCI Determination of Need
Date: Sunday, December 7, 2025 8:05:51 PM

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12/7/25

Teryl Smith
Bureau Director for Health Care Safety and Quality
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

Dear Director Smith:

My name is Shelly Plumb, and I am a resident of [REDACTED], Massachusetts. I am writing to express my strong support for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's proposed proton therapy center.

As a patient at Dana-Farber, I have experienced firsthand the expert, compassionate, and highly coordinated care that the Institute provides. Being diagnosed with colon cancer at age 50 years old, I am here because of the treatment and care I received at Dana-Farber.

I know how critical proton therapy treatment is for many cancer patients—particularly for pediatric patients whose developing bodies are especially vulnerable to radiation and those with tumors near vital organs.

The need for this treatment in our region is overwhelming. Right now, Massachusetts only has one operational proton beam, and many patients are forced to seek treatment elsewhere. This innovation makes it possible for more patients to receive treatment closer to home and have continuity in their care team. The new center will also serve patients receiving care at other hospitals across the region, allowing them to return to their home providers for follow-up.

Nearly every Massachusetts family has a story about someone whose life was touched by the incredible work being done at Dana-Farber. As cancer rates rise and the need for advanced treatments grow, this center will help ensure that patients have access to cutting-edge, equitable cancer care for decades.

I respectfully urge you to approve Dana-Farber's application so that more patients in the Commonwealth can benefit from life-saving and innovative proton therapy.

Sincerely,

Shelly Plumb

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

11/25/2025

Teryl Smith
Bureau Director for Health Care Safety and Quality
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

Dear Director Smith:

My name is Wayne Gietz and I am writing on behalf of Sturdy Health and Sturdy Memorial Hospital, which serves patients from Attleboro and across Massachusetts. We are pleased to express our strong support for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Determination of Need application to establish a proton therapy center on its Longwood campus.

As a hospital that regularly cares for patients with complex oncologic needs, we recognize the critical importance of ensuring that children and adults have access to the safest, most effective radiation treatment options available. Proton therapy offers highly precise, targeted radiation that minimizes damage to surrounding healthy tissue and reduces long-term side effects—benefits that are especially significant for pediatric patients and adults with tumors located near critical organs.

Massachusetts faces a significant unmet need for proton therapy. Currently there is only one operational proton beam site in New England, but even if the remaining machines were at full capacity, the need for proton greatly outweighs the capacity. Because of those barriers, many patients experience delays or are unable to access this treatment. Others must leave their established oncology teams and travel to outside institutions, a disruption that complicates care coordination, increases risk, and places avoidable burdens on patients and families.

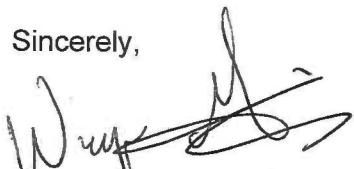
The center will be the first in the area to deliver treatment in a seated or inclined position, using a compact cyclotron system that reduces both the cost and footprint of proton therapy and expands access for patients who may otherwise have difficulty tolerating traditional treatment setups. This state-of-the-art design will accelerate the availability of proton therapy and strengthen the Commonwealth's capacity to meet rising demand.

We value Dana-Farber's commitment to making this resource available to pediatric and adult patients from hospitals across Massachusetts and New England. This collaborative approach will allow our patients to receive specialized radiation therapy at Dana-Farber while maintaining follow-up and ongoing care with their primary oncology teams, supporting continuity of care across institutions.

For these reasons, we believe that this project will meaningfully expand access to critical treatment, reduce barriers for families, improve long-term outcomes for pediatric and adult patients, and support a more coordinated and equitable regional cancer care system.

We respectfully urge approval of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Determination of Need application.

Sincerely,



Wayne C. Gietz, MA

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Sturdy Health

wgietz@sturdyhealth.org



December 9, 2025

Teryl Smith
Bureau Director for Health Care Safety and Quality
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

Dear Director Smith:

My name is Dr. Brian Crompton, and I am a clinician practicing in Boston, Massachusetts. I am writing in strong support of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's proposal to establish a proton therapy center.

As a clinician caring for cancer patients, I know how vital it is to offer treatments that maximize tumor control while minimizing harm to surrounding tissue. This is particularly true for pediatric oncology patients as exiting radiation from traditional photon treatment can affect the developing body and cause harm to developmental growth, particularly reproductive organs.

Massachusetts currently faces a significant unmet need for proton therapy. Currently there is only one operational proton beam site in New England, but even if the remaining machines were at full capacity, the need for proton greatly outweighs the capacity. Because of those barriers, many patients experience delays or are unable to access this treatment. Others must leave their established oncology teams and travel to outside institutions, a disruption that complicates care coordination, increases risk, and places avoidable burdens on patients and families.

Dana-Farber's proposed proton therapy center will be a moment of important advancement in regional cancer care. The center will be the first in the region to deliver proton therapy in a seated or inclined position, using a compact cyclotron system that lowers cost and reduces the footprint of proton therapy. This innovation has accelerated Dana-Farber's ability to bring the service online and will make this form of treatment more accessible to the patients who need it most.

The center will be located adjacent to other clinical and treatment spaces at Dana-Farber, allowing patients to move seamlessly between appointments and maintain full continuity with their care teams. With projected capacity for over 200 patients per year and up to 6,000 individual treatments, this center will meaningfully expand access for pediatric and adult patients not only at Dana-Farber but across the region.

Dana-Farber is committed to providing equitable, evidence-based care and preparing for what it means to treat cancer effectively over the next 10 to 20 years. This proton therapy center is a critical part of that mission.

I respectfully urge approval of this application so that Massachusetts patients can receive expanded access to state-of-the-art proton therapy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Crompton, MD".

Brian Crompton, MD



Dana-Farber/Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center

December 9, 2025

Teryl Smith
Bureau Director for Health Care Safety and Quality
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

Andrew E. Place, M.D., Ph.D.

Vice President & Pediatric Chief Medical Officer
Dana-Farber/Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorder Center
Department of Pediatrics, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
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Andrew_Place@dfci.harvard.edu
www.dana-farber.org

Dear Director Smith:

My name is Andrew Place and I am the Chief Medical Officer of the Dana-Farber/Boston Children's Cancer and Blood Disorders Center in Boston, Massachusetts. I am writing in strong support of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's proposal to establish a proton therapy center that holds the promise of improving care for children with a variety of malignancies.

As a pediatric oncologist caring for children with cancer, I know how vital it is to offer treatments that maximize tumor control while minimizing harm to surrounding tissue. This is particularly true for pediatric patients as radiation from traditional photon treatment can negatively impact the developing body and cause long-term sequelae including increasing lifetime risk of secondary malignancies.

Massachusetts faces a significant unmet need for proton therapy. Currently, there is only one operational proton beam site in New England located at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) where two additional machines have been removed from service while being upgraded. However, even when fully operational, the need for proton therapy will still greatly outweigh the capacity at MGH. Because of barriers to access, many patients experience delays or are unable to receive this treatment. Others must leave their established oncology teams and travel to proton centers in New York or Philadelphia, a disruption that complicates care coordination, increases risk, and places avoidable burdens on patients and families.

Dana-Farber's proposed proton therapy center will advance regional access to pioneering cancer care. The center will be the first in the region to deliver proton therapy in a seated or inclined position, using a compact cyclotron system that lowers cost and reduces the footprint of proton therapy. This innovation has accelerated Dana-Farber's ability to bring the service online and will make this form of treatment more accessible to the patients who need it most.

The center will be located adjacent to other clinical and treatment spaces at Dana-Farber and Boston Children's Hospital, allowing patients to move seamlessly between appointments and maintain full continuity with their care teams. The importance of this continuity cannot be overstated. With projected capacity for over 200 patients per year and up to 6,000 individual treatments, this center will meaningfully expand access for pediatric and adult patients not only at Dana-Farber but across the region. Our pediatric program has strong ties to regional providers outside of Boston and the addition of our proton center will improve care continuity for these patients who may have already encountered our Center through second opinions, surgical subspecialties or through access to other novel treatments or clinical trials.

Dana-Farber is committed to providing equitable, evidence-based care and preparing for what it means to treat cancer effectively over the next 10 to 20 years. This proton therapy center is a critical part of that mission. I respectfully urge approval of this application so that Massachusetts patients, particularly its youngest residents, can access state-of-the-art proton therapy.

Sincerely,

Andrew E. Place, MD, PhD



Teaching Affiliates of Harvard Medical School

Peter F. Orio III, DO, MS, FASTRO, FABS
Chair
Department of Radiation Oncology

Associate Professor
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December 10, 2025

Teryl Smith
Bureau Director for Health Care Safety and Quality
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
67 Forest Street, Marlborough, MA 01752

Dear Director Smith,

I am a radiation oncologist practicing in the greater Boston area, and I write in strong support of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Determination of Need application to establish a proton therapy center in Boston, Massachusetts. From both a clinical and public-health perspective, this project addresses a clear regional access gap and aligns directly with the Commonwealth's goals of advancing high-value, equitable, and future-ready cancer care.

Radiation therapy is a cornerstone of cancer treatment, and proton therapy represents a well-established, evidence-based modality for selected pediatric and adult malignancies. Its physical dose properties allow for precise tumor coverage while substantially reducing radiation exposure to surrounding normal tissues. For pediatric patients in particular, reductions in integral dose are associated with lower risks of growth impairment, endocrine dysfunction, cardiopulmonary toxicity, infertility, and secondary malignancies, outcomes that can carry lifelong clinical and economic consequences. Similar benefits are documented for adult patients with thoracic, gastrointestinal, central nervous system, head and neck, and re-irradiation indications.

Despite these established indications, access to proton therapy in Massachusetts and New England is severely constrained. There is currently only one operational proton therapy facility serving Massachusetts, and the entire New England region, a catchment area of more than 15 million residents. Existing regional capacity is insufficient to meet current clinical demand, even under optimal utilization scenarios. As a result, patients face prolonged treatment delays, referral outside the Commonwealth, or the inability to receive proton therapy altogether. These barriers disproportionately affect pediatric patients, medically complex patients, and families with limited resources, directly conflicting with state goals related to access and equity.

DFCI's proposed proton therapy center meaningfully expands regional capacity rather than duplicating existing services. The center's projected throughput, over 200 patients annually and up to 6,000 treatment fractions represents a substantial increase in access for Massachusetts residents while also serving patients referred from across Greater New England.

Importantly, the proposed center incorporates next-generation compact proton technology that significantly reduces physical footprint and infrastructure costs compared with legacy proton facilities. The planned seated treatment design enhances efficiency and patient tolerability while enabling faster deployment and lower operating overhead. This approach reflects responsible capital planning and directly addresses historical concerns regarding proton therapy cost escalation.

Locating the center within DFCI's integrated clinical environment in the Longwood Medical Area of Boston further strengthens its value proposition. Patients will remain within established multidisciplinary care teams, facilitating coordination of systemic therapy, surgery, imaging, and supportive services. This integration reduces duplication, enhances safety, and improves continuity of care, key priorities for consideration of a DoN.

From a statewide planning perspective, this proposal supports Massachusetts' long-term oncology infrastructure needs. Cancer incidence, survivorship, and the number of patients eligible for advanced radiation modalities are projected to rise over the next decade. This project ensures that the Commonwealth is positioned not only to meet current demand, but to do so in a way that prioritizes value, access, and patient-centered outcomes.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to approve Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Determination of Need application. The proposed proton therapy center is justified by population need, enhances equity, expands capacity responsibly, and delivers clear public health benefit to patients across Massachusetts and Greater New England.

I appreciate your consideration and would be pleased to provide additional clinical or regional perspective if helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter F. Orio III".

Peter F. Orio III, DO, MS, FABS, FASTRO