



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



Kimberly Stegmaier, M.D.
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Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Associate Chief, Division of Hematology/Oncology
Boston Children's Hospital

David G. Nathan Professor of Pediatrics
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Institute Member, Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT

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December 1, 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. Kimberly Stegmaier, 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 clinician caring for children and adolescents with cancer, I know how vital it is to offer treatments that maximize tumor control while minimizing harm to surrounding tissue. This is especially relevant for children with cancer as exiting radiation from traditional photon treatment can affect the developing body and cause serious long-term harm to vital organs. Children receiving radiation therapy for brain tumor treatment are particularly at risk for life-long and potentially devastating injury to brain development from photon therapy.

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 these barriers, 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 additional burdens on patients and families already under significant financial and psychological stress.

Dana-Farber's proposed proton therapy center is important to advance 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 treatment. 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, including children, can receive expanded access to state-of-the-art proton therapy.

Sincerely,



Kimberly Stegmaier, M.D.

Chair, Department of Pediatric Oncology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Associate Chief, Division of Hematology/Oncology at Boston Children's Hospital
David G. Nathan Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School
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From: [O'Neill, Allison F.,MD](#)
To: [Smith, Teryl A \(DPH\)](#); [DPH-DL - DoN Program](#)
Subject: Dana-Farber Cancer Institute proton beam facility
Date: Thursday, December 11, 2025 10:31:10 AM
Attachments: [image001.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

Dear Director Smith:

My name is Allison O'Neill 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 pediatric oncologist, I have seen first-hand the evolution of treatment from electron beam radiotherapy to proton beam radiotherapy for our pediatric patients. The ability to more accurately deliver proton beam radiotherapy to the tumor site, sparing toxicity to surrounding tissue, is of crucial importance for young, developing children. As we gather more evidence regarding the equivalence in efficacy between electrons and protons, protons will only further become a necessary standard across all pediatric diseases.

Massachusetts currently faces a significant unmet need for proton therapy. There is only one operational proton beam site in New England and we find that our patient needs consistently outweigh access. Sharing care with providers across the city engenders a significant disruption in continuity of care and on occasion, when we have to send our patients out of state, this causes - as you might imagine - a serious disruption.

Dana-Farber's proposed proton therapy center will be a moment of important advancement in regional cancer care for patients cared for primarily at Dana-Farber but also by patients cared for by other providers in the region - thereby meaningfully serving the community.

Dana-Farber is committed to providing equitable, evidence-based care at the highest level for all patients facing a cancer diagnosis. 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. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alli O'Neill

Allison O'Neill, MD
Clinical Director, Solid Tumor Program

Director, Liver Tumor Center of Excellence

Associate Professor and Senior Physician

VP, Clinical Performance Management

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Email: allison_oneill@dfci.harvard.edu

I generally respond to emails between the hours of 7am-6pm, M-F.



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

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Dana-Farber
Cancer Institute



Boston
Children's

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

Susan Chi, MD
Clinical Director, Pediatric Neuro-Oncology
Department of Pediatric Oncology
Associate Professor of Pediatrics
Harvard Medical School

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December 11, 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 Susan Chi, and I am a Pediatric Neuro-Oncologist practicing in Boston, Massachusetts. I am writing in strong support of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's proposal to establish a proton radiation 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 brain and spinal tumor patients as exiting radiation therapy from traditional photon treatment can affect the developing body and cause harm to developmental growth, particularly in the brain, but in other midline structures such as the esophagus, heart and portions of the reproductive organs.

Massachusetts currently faces a significant unmet need for proton therapy. As a quaternary center for clinical care, patients and families wish to access the best care possible. 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 this, 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 not only adult patients but as importantly, pediatric patients, and 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,



Susan N. Chi, MD

Clinical Director, Pediatric Neuro-Oncology

Institute Physician, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School

December 12, 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. Eric Dickson, and I am writing on behalf of UMass Memorial Health, which serves patients from Central Massachusetts and across the Commonwealth. 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 safety net health system that regularly cares for patients with complex oncologic needs and recently secured approval to develop a proton therapy service, we recognize the critical importance of ensuring that adults and children 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.

Given Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Jimmy Fund Clinic and proximity to Boston Children's Hospital, we believe this proton therapy service will prove particularly beneficial to pediatric cancer patients and their loved ones, making access to this lifesaving technology convenient and enabling close clinical coordination with pediatric patients' primary care teams and other sites of care.

Massachusetts faces a significant unmet need for proton therapy. While we establish our own proton therapy service, there is currently only one operational proton beam site in New England. The need for proton greatly outweighs the capacity and because of these barriers, many patients experience delays or are unable to access this treatment. Others must leave their established oncology teams and travel to other institutions, a disruption that complicates care coordination, increases risk, and places avoidable burdens and stress on patients and families.

As a member of the Dana-Farber Cancer Care Collaborative, we have long held a collaborative, trusted relationship with the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and have witnessed, first-hand, the transformative impact of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's clinicians and caregivers. We value Dana-Farber's commitment to making this resource available to pediatric and adult patients from hospitals across Massachusetts, New England and beyond.

THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF HEALING



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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric W. Dickson".

Eric W. Dickson, MD, MHCM, FACEP
President and CEO, UMass Memorial Health
508-334-3330, eric.dickson@umassmemorial.org

THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF HEALING

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Eric W. Dickson, MD, MHCM, FACEP
President and CEO, UMass Memorial Health
Professor of Emergency Medicine, UMass Medical School

ummhealth.org

Dear Director Smith:

My name is Alex Owen-Post, and I am both a Dana-Farber employee and a Dana-Farber patient. I live in [REDACTED], Massachusetts, and I'm writing to express my strong support for Dana-Farber's proposal to build a proton therapy center.

In 2023, a seizure at home led to the discovery of a brain tumor—something I never expected at my age. Dana-Farber guided me through surgery, chemotherapy, and recovery with incredible compassion and coordination. But when it came time for radiation, I needed proton therapy due to the location of my tumor. Because the only operational proton center in New England is at Massachusetts General Hospital, I had to transfer there for treatment.

I'm grateful proton therapy was available, but it was difficult to step away from the team that had been caring for me. Switching systems, new logistics, separate portals, different care processes—these add real strain during an already overwhelming moment. Living through this myself showed me how important it is for patients to receive the right treatment without added obstacles and to remain with the care team that knows them best.

Proton therapy is not optional for many patients. It can spare healthy brain tissue, protect developing bodies, and reduce lifelong side effects. With only one proton center serving the entire region, patients face scheduling delays, travel burdens, and fragmented care. A second center at Dana-Farber would make it possible for more people to stay with their care teams and receive the most appropriate treatment without added hardship.

For patients like me—and for the many who will face these decisions in the future—I respectfully urge you to approve Dana-Farber's Determination of Need application.

Sincerely,

Alex Owen-Post

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054*

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Health Care Financing
Telecommunications,
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December 2, 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:

As a Massachusetts state representative for residents in Boston, I am writing in support of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Determination of Need application to establish a proton therapy center.

With rising cancer rates, residents of my district, including many families who rely on nearby medical institutions for treatment, deserve access to the most advanced and effective cancer therapies available.

Right now, access to proton therapy in New England is limited, forcing families to travel long distances or manage care across multiple health systems. For many of my constituents, transportation access can create a barrier to care, which in turn can delay treatment and create significant financial and emotional strain. By establishing a proton therapy center in the Longwood Medical Area, Dana-Farber will greatly expand access to this essential treatment and ensure that patients can stay connected to their care teams.

This new technology will make proton therapy more efficient, affordable, and inclusive for patients who may not tolerate traditional treatment setups, such as pediatric patients. Dana-Farber has also committed to treating adult and pediatric patients from across the Commonwealth, not only those in its care.

This project represents a meaningful step towards addressing cancer disparities, strengthening continuity of care, and supporting equitable access to modern cancer treatment.

I respectfully urge you to approve Dana-Farber's application.

Sincerely,

Representative Chynah Tyler

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chynah Tyler".

Chynah Tyler
State Representative
7th Suffolk

December 18, 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 Paris Prinsen, and I am a resident of [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 two-time cancer survivor and a current Dana-Farber patient. While my treatment saved my life, I continue to live with significant long-term health effects related to radiation exposure. These include pituitary dysfunction, secondary benign growths, and damage to other organs. These late effects require ongoing medical care and have had a lasting impact on my quality of life.

Proton therapy has the ability to precisely target tumors while sparing the surrounding healthy tissue, significantly reducing radiation exposure to critical organs and endocrine structures. Access to this technology could help future patients avoid or lessen many of the long-term complications that survivors like myself now face, particularly pediatric and young adult patients who have decades of life ahead of them.

Establishing a proton therapy center at Dana-Farber would allow patients to receive this advanced form of treatment within an institution that has extensive experience in survivorship care. Dana-Farber's leadership in oncology and long-term follow-up uniquely positions it to deliver proton therapy in a way that prioritizes both survival and long-term health.

I respectfully urge the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to approve Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's application. This center represents an opportunity to reduce lifelong treatment-related harm while continuing to deliver world-class cancer care to patients across the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Paris Prinsen
[REDACTED]