



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



Kimberly Stegmaier, M.D.  
Chair, Department of Pediatric Oncology  
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Associate Chief, Division of Hematology/Oncology  
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David G. Nathan Professor of Pediatrics  
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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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KS', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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](mailto: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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Susan N. Chi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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**

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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](mailto:eric.dickson@umassmemorial.org)

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**THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF HEALING**

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Tel: 508-334-3330  
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Email: [eric.dickson@umassmemorial.org](mailto:eric.dickson@umassmemorial.org)

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

[ummhealth.org](http://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]



**CHYNAH TYLER**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
7TH SUFFOLK DISTRICT  
STATE HOUSE, ROOM 33  
TEL. (617) 722-2060  
Chynah.Tyler@MAhouse.gov

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

VICE CHAIR  
State Administration  
and Regulatory Oversight  
Committees:  
Ways and Means  
Health Care Financing  
Telecommunications,  
Utilities and Energy

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". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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]



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

SENATOR WILLIAM N. BROWNSBERGER  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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November 24, 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 writing to express my non opposition for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's filing of an application for Determination of Need (DON) with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to develop a proton therapy cancer center on our Longwood campus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William N. Brownsberger".

**William N. Brownsberger**  
State Senator  
Suffolk and Middlesex District



**Boston Children's Hospital**

Where the world comes for answers



**HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL  
TEACHING HOSPITAL**

**Ryan Nagy, MD**  
**President and System Chief Operations Officer**  
300 Longwood Avenue, Boston, MA 02115  
617-355-3186 | [ryan.nagy@childrens.harvard.edu](mailto:ryan.nagy@childrens.harvard.edu)

November 21, 2025

Commissioner Robert Goldstein, MD, PhD  
Director Dennis Renaud  
Determination of Need Program  
Department of Public Health  
250 Washington St.  
Boston, MA 02108

I write this letter in strong support of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Determination of Need Application DFCI-25090516-RS to construct a proton beam accelerator.

Boston Children's Hospital and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute jointly partner to deliver world class oncology care to children and adolescents from throughout Massachusetts, across New England and around the world. We are consistently rated as one of the top programs in the country. The most recent US News ranking of top pediatric hospitals ranked our program third in the country, with excellent results in cancer survival, very high experience in surgical procedures (which are associated with better outcomes), availability of advanced technologies, and excellent commitment to quality improvement and clinical research initiatives. <https://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/area/ma/dana-farber-cancer-institute-6140583/pediatric-rankings/cancer>

Throughout our long history together, we have worked tirelessly to pioneer new approaches to cancer care, develop safer and more effective therapies, and to enhance understanding of the longitudinal care needs of pediatric cancer survivors. From Dr. Sidney Farber's pioneering work on pediatric leukemias through our recent efforts to enhance pediatric CAR-T therapies, we have helped to significantly advance the field of pediatric oncology. We also co-lead one of the premier pediatric oncology training fellowships in the country [whose graduates consistently help us maintain our national clinical and scientific leadership].

One of the unique aspects of our model is the ability to provide high-complexity surgical and Medical-Surgical Intensive Care Unit services at Boston Children's in combination with outpatient and ancillary services at Dana-Farber. Boston Children's maintains oncology specific surgical capabilities across the full continuum of surgical care offered including general surgery, orthopedic surgery, neurosurgery, ophthalmology and urology. These offerings are dependent on complimentary medical/chemotherapy and radiation therapy support.

Our integrated model with Dana-Farber provides a comprehensive approach to pediatric oncology, combining the unique strengths of both institutions. This collaborative effort enhances the continuum of

care from high-complexity surgeries to outpatient and ancillary services. The integration of services such as general surgery, orthopedic surgery, ophthalmology, neurosurgery, urology and others underscores Boston Children's Hospital's commitment to providing comprehensive oncology-specific surgical care.

The addition of proton beam therapy, as noted in Dana-Farber's Determination of Need (DON) application, highlights a significant advancement in pediatric cancer treatment. Proton therapy's precision in targeting tumors while minimizing damage to surrounding healthy tissue is particularly beneficial for young patients. Neuro-oncology stands out as an area that will particularly benefit, given the delicate nature of brain and nervous system tumors and the critical importance of preserving surrounding neurological function.

By securing approval for the DON, the joint program can continue to offer cutting-edge therapies, reinforcing our leadership in clinical and scientific domains, and most importantly, providing vulnerable children with the best possible care and outcomes. This standard of care for treatment of patients with certain solid organ tumors exemplifies a deeply integrated approach to pediatric oncology, meeting both medical and supportive care needs of the children and families you serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ryan Nagy', written in a cursive style.

Ryan Nagy, MD  
President and System COO, Boston Children's Hospital