



MIDWEST PROTON RADIOTHERAPY INSTITUTE TREATS 100TH PEDIATRIC PATIENT

Young Boy Treated for Rare Form of Brain Cancer

IU SIMON CANCER CENTER

An IU School of Medicine & Clarian Health Partnership

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 24, 2009

Bloomington, Ind. – On Tuesday, July 21, 11 year-old Jonathan Nugent and Bloomington’s [Midwest Proton Radiotherapy Institute](#) (MPRI), shared an important milestone: as the young boy from Valparaiso, Ind., completed his 13th and final proton therapy session, he became the 100th pediatric patient to complete treatment at MPRI since opening in February 2004.

The occasion was cause for a celebration, complete with cake and a gift card for Jonathan, who was diagnosed with a rare form of brain cancer last March.

“There are only five proton centers in the country and to have one in Indiana, it’s incredible,” says Jonathan’s mother, Jo Nugent.

Because a proton beam can be contoured to the exact shape of a tumor and programmed to stop at the cancer, proton therapy spares healthy cells—and in Jonathan’s case, important brain functions—from the effects of radiation.

“Proton therapy is an excellent tool that has enabled us to do many, many good things for pediatric patients,” says Dr. Andrew Chang – a staff physician at [Riley Hospital for Children](#), the MPRI director of pediatric radiation oncology, and one of only a handful of doctors in the country who specialize in pediatric radiation oncology

Jonathan’s cancer is extremely rare—only two other patients have been treated with the same disease at MPRI. As a registered nurse, Jo knew it would be difficult to undergo the combination of treatments recommended for her son, including surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and finally proton beam therapy.

As Jonathan made his way to the treatment room on his final day of therapy, he joked and talked sports with radiation therapist Matt Hines, who has been known to—by request—dress in a hula skirt and show off his dance moves for young patients on their last treatment day.

“We always give our pediatric patients something to look forward to, like a visit to our toy table at the end of the week,” says radiation therapist Debbie Stockhover. “We try to make our patients feel as at home as possible and to do what we can to ease their anxiety.”

“He really surprised me,” she says. “He’s been a real trooper.” Five days a week, laying on a bed cradled in a device to help him stay still, Jonathan was moved within the field of the proton beam. After carefully calibrating his position with the treatment plan, the actual delivery of the proton beam takes less than one minute, allowing Jonathan and his

mother to be on their way in under an hour. “After Jonathan’s treatments, we would go bowling or swimming,” says Mrs. Nugent.

Before Jonathan left MPRI for the last time, Dr. Chang—clad in a Spiderman shirt—and the center’s radiation therapists gathered around their young patient for a picture.

“Everyone at MPRI has been absolutely wonderful, very embracing,” Mrs. Nugent says before heading for home. “From the first day when the staff greeted us at the door to today, they just bent over backwards for us.”

ABOUT MPRI

MPRI is a state-of-the-art center offering proton therapy: a highly precise mechanism of treating cancer. Since February 2004, MPRI physicians have treated adults and children with both benign and cancerous tumors, while protecting healthy tissues and normal structures. Located on the Indiana University Bloomington campus, MPRI is the third of six high-energy proton centers currently operating in the United States and is the only facility located in the Midwest. The MPRI Clinic was constructed within the [Indiana University Cyclotron Facility](#), the manufacturer of the proton beam equipment. MPRI is programmatically incorporated into the [IU Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center](#) and is a [Clarian Health Partner](#). Referrals from physicians or self referrals from patients are welcome. For more information, visit www.mpri.org or call 866.ITS.MPRI.

MEDIA CONTACTS

Amanda B. Burnham

Manager, Marketing and Development

aburnham@mpri.org

866.ITS.MPRI

Author: Mary Henderson, MRH Public Relations