



## Working Together to Eradicate Lymphoma

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To cite this article: Jerry Freundlich (2000) Working Together to Eradicate Lymphoma, Oncology Issues, 15:5, 28-28, DOI: [10.1080/10463356.2000.11905162](https://doi.org/10.1080/10463356.2000.11905162)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10463356.2000.11905162>



Published online: 17 Oct 2017.



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## Working Together to Eradicate Lymphoma

by Jerry Freundlich

**A**t least once a day the Cure For Lymphoma Foundation (CFL) fields a phone call from a patient diagnosed with late-stage lymphoma. Each time the story is the same. The patient confides that he or she is tired, has swollen glands, or is feeling run down. When the symptoms persist and tests are run, a diagnosis of lymphoma eventually follows. Until that moment, most patients have never heard the word lymphoma. For others, it does not immediately register that lymphoma is a type of cancer—the second fastest rising cancer in the U.S. today.

While my diagnosis nine years ago occurred more by chance, I am forever grateful to my internist for catching this disease at an early stage. An avid athlete, I began experiencing persistent back pain that interfered with my jogging schedule. During an annual physical exam, my doctor noticed a lump in my neck. In retrospect, I had been having trouble closing my shirt collar but didn't think too much of it. I was diagnosed with diffuse large cell lymphoma and treated aggressively with chemotherapy and radiation. I was fortunate that a chemotherapy protocol worked for me. For many others, however, there are no protocols to which they respond.

With the support of my oncologist from Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, my family and I reached out to friends and others touched by lymphoma and established the CFL. Our hope was

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to fund research that would result in successful treatments for all lymphoma patients and fill the need for reliable educational materials.

In six years, CFL has grown to a nationwide, not-for-profit organization that is funding cutting-edge research, innovative programs and services, and providing readily accessible up-to-date information to ease the burden of patients and health care professionals touched by lymphoma. But we can't do it alone! Community oncology health care providers—doctors, nurses, social workers, and program administrators—are all part of an integral team aimed at catching this disease and stopping it in its tracks.

To make sure you have bona fide resources to support newly-diagnosed patients, CFL provides educational guides entitled *Understanding Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma* and *Understanding Hodgkin's Disease* and a series of fact sheets, "The More You Know..." on a variety of topics. Together, CFL's quarterly newsletter, reports on innovations in research and clinical studies, shares survivors' stories, highlights CFL's public education initiatives and foundation activities, and addresses numerous issues of interest to lymphoma patients and health care professionals. These are all free to anyone who is interested in learning more about lymphoma. You can order these materials in bulk to distribute in your waiting rooms.

CFL also offers educational programs across the country, which provide patients and their families with the most up-to-date lymphoma information from leaders in the field. These free programs include *Lymphoma & You Teleconferences* (October 20 for professionals, December 13 for

patients) that can be accessed nationwide via a toll-free telephone number. CFL's day-long *Living Well with Lymphoma Family Forum* will travel to Detroit, Mich. (September 16), and CFL's interactive *Lymphoma Q & A* will be held in Houston, Tex. (October 21).

CFL's *Patient-to-Patient Network* links newly diagnosed patients with lymphoma survivors via the telephone, e-mail, or letter writing. Patients and family members are matched with survivors and experienced family members who can share unique insights into living with lymphoma. In addition, CFL offers a financial aid program designed to help cover some costs associated with quality-of-life issues of lymphoma patients undergoing treatment. CFL's toll-free line (1-800-CFL-6848) is available for information and resources concerning diagnosis, treatment, and support.

As the incidence of lymphoma continues to rise inexplicably, staying up-to-date on innovations in lymphoma research and care is an even greater challenge. To keep current, CFL has designed some professional education programs, including an annual professional teleconference and a symposium for lymphoma nurses titled "Lymphoma Update and Standards of Care" at the annual meeting of the Oncology Nursing Society Congress.

For more information on these and other CFL educational, support, advocacy, and research programs, call 1-800-CFL-6848, or visit the web site: [www.cfl.org](http://www.cfl.org). To be added to our mailing list to receive our free quarterly newsletter and program announcements, send your name, affiliation, address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail to: [infocfl@cfl.org](mailto:infocfl@cfl.org).