



WHOLISTICRELEAF™

A DIVISION OF
WHOLISTIC PEDIATRICS & FAMILY CARE
ESTABLISHED IN 2005

Tampa Woman with Childhood Cancer Finds Pain Relief with Marijuana



Cancer knows no race, no gender, and most regrettably, no age.

Christina Gates was just a young child when she awoke one night screaming from pain in her left hip. Her parents rushed her to the emergency room where the doctors performed a series of

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tests that left them perplexed. She had a lack of blood flow to her leg and with all that was happening, bone cancer was suspected. Christina's parents took her to see a Moffitt Cancer Center doctor, where they would receive the clarity they were seeking. They confirmed Christina had necrosis of her left femur, and even more concerning, she had cancer.

Christina was just eight years old.

Her parents immediately began seeking treatment to help Christina. Her initial diagnosis was Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS), also known as preleukemia. This quickly evolved into Acute Myeloid Leukemia, (AML), a cancer of the blood and bone marrow that spreads quickly if left untreated. Christina started what would amount to a year's worth of chemotherapy. Unable to eat, Christina's cancer team at All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, gave her a pill they said would kick-start her appetite. It did. The medicine was Marinol; an FDA approved form of synthetic THC.

After completing chemotherapy, Christina went into remission for six glorious months. But then her cancer returned with a vengeance. Both her parents and cancer team decided more aggressive treatment was required, despite the undesirable long-term side effects. Christina received a combination of full body radiation and a bone marrow transplant.

Thankfully, the treatment worked. Christina has been in remission since 2003. However, she paid a price for her survival. Unbearable nerve pain, ovarian failure, and menopause at age 25. These are just some of the ways her body has reacted to the treatment of her youth.

"Following cancer treatment, many patients chronically suffer from

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About
David Berger,
MD, FAAP



Dr. David Berger ("Dr. David"), a Board Certified Pediatrician with over 20 years of experience as a clinician, has developed a national reputation in wholistic pediatric primary care. Dr. David is considered Tampa Bay area's leading authority on medical cannabis for adults and children and is one of the nation's most experienced pediatricians using medical cannabis to help facilitate the treatment of children with chronic conditions.

Dr. David graduated from The Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1994 and completed his pediatric residency at the University of South Florida/ Tampa General Hospital where he first began utilizing wholistic therapies. Dr. David has been in private practice since 1997 and in 2005 opened Wholistic Pediatrics & Family Care, his medical practice in Tampa, Florida. In 2010, Dr. David was appointed Assistant Professor at the University of South Florida College of Nursing. In 2016, he launched Wholistic ReLeaf to help qualified patients become certified to use medical cannabis.

www.WholisticReLeaf.com

significant pain, malnutrition, intestinal issues, depression, and anxiety. They struggle to find treatments that truly help,” said David Berger, MD of Wholistic ReLeaf.

“I tried taking painkillers and pain shots, but nothing was working,” said Christina. “I don’t like the chemical aspect of medicine and the harm that comes with it and wanted to avoid taking pharmaceuticals if possible.”

Seeking relief, Christina went on a trip to Colorado where recreational cannabis was legal.

“While there, I experimented with recreational cannabis, and I was amazed at how much cannabis helped,” said Christina. “But since I lived in Florida and it wasn’t approved, I had to wait.”

With the support of her cancer team, Christina decided to have Dr. Berger at Wholistic ReLeaf evaluate her to be treated with medical cannabis under Florida law. Shortly after, she received her medical cannabis card and began taking medical cannabis.

“Immediately, I felt comfortable with zero side effects,” said Christina. “My symptoms have gone way down, and I can go all day without pain in my body, especially in my joints and back.”

Christina has received a lot of help to get to this point and knows that her leg hurting that night many years ago probably saved her life. If not for that, she may have never known she had cancer until it was too late.

“With medical cannabis, I have an overwhelming sense of positiveness, happiness, and energy that stays with me throughout the day,” said Christina. “My ability to fall asleep has allowed me to feel rested and not sluggish and have a more positive and productive day.”

Most people with cancer, including children, take a considerable amount of pharmaceuticals in an attempt to alleviate the side effects caused by radiation and chemotherapy.

“I am not aware of any other treatment that brings more symptom relief to patients with cancer than medical cannabis,” said Dr. Berger. “Almost any symptom of cancer, or side effect of the chemotherapy and radiation, can be improved with the proper use of medical cannabis.”

Christina has no regret about her choice to take medical cannabis. She advocates for it to both current cancer patients as well as those in remission.

“With cancer treatment, they are trying risky things already anyway,” said Christina. “Why not try something that works and provides relief? I recommend it.”

For more information about the transformative effects of medical cannabis, visit Wholistic ReLeaf at WholisticReLeaf.com.



About Wholistic ReLeaf

Wholistic ReLeaf, founded in 2016 by Dr. David Berger of Wholistic Pediatric and Family Care, empowers families and patients to choose the best treatment approach available for their medical condition. The mission of Wholistic ReLeaf is to evaluate and certify qualified patients who meet the State of Florida legal requirements for receiving medical cannabis and provide medical cannabis management and dosing consultations to patients certified by other Florida physicians. Wholistic ReLeaf is committed to providing patients with the best possible care, while also complying with the ever-shifting legal landscape of medical cannabis in the State of Florida.

For more information, or to find out if you or someone you know may be eligible to use medical cannabis as part of a customized treatment plan, visit www.WholisticReLeaf.com.