

# PRESS RELEASE



ACKERMAN<sup>™</sup>  
Cancer Center

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## National Advocacy Campaign for Patient Access to Care Receives Local Support *Ackerman Cancer Center supports “Tell Insurers: Fight Cancer, Not Me”, a nationwide patient rights campaign*

Jacksonville, FL – Ackerman Cancer Center today announced its support for *Tell Insurers: Fight Cancer, Not Me*, a nationwide advocacy campaign led by the [Alliance for Proton Therapy Access](#). They are speaking out so that no patients in need of proton therapy have to experience a delay in receiving life-saving cancer treatment from their insurance company.

All cancer patients deserve access to the best available cancer treatment recommended by their physicians. Too many patients, however, experience insurance company delays and denials when their doctors recommend proton therapy. [Proton therapy](#) is an advanced form of radiation therapy that offers patients fewer side effects and improved quality of life. It is especially beneficial for patients undergoing treatment for head and neck cancers.

Kathy Brooks has worked in oncology nursing for more than 30 years, and at Ackerman Cancer Center since 2015, so she understands exactly how difficult cancer treatment can be. When she was diagnosed with tongue cancer in 2016, she knew she needed proton therapy.

“Because of my experience as an oncology nurse, I knew that treatment for head and neck cancer is very difficult. Proton therapy was my best chance to survive and have quality of life, but unfortunately my insurance did not approve it. Going forward with my proton treatment, I had to fight the cancer and deal with the insurance appeals process every step of the way.”

Kathy never took a day off from her job at Ackerman Cancer Center during her treatment. “Proton therapy was truly a blessing for me. I was able to continue working, and didn’t need a feeding tube – which unfortunately is often not the case with traditional radiation for head and neck cancer.”

“Being denied treatment puts unnecessary strain on patients who are already under high amounts of stress. It is important that insurers provide timely, fair decisions that consider both the physician’s recommendation, the treatment’s efficacy, and the quality of life for the patient,” says Scot Ackerman, MD, Medical Director of Ackerman Cancer Center.

Ackerman Cancer Center and the Alliance are working together to ensure that proton therapy is available for all who need it. Their goal is to create an open and honest dialogue between patients, providers, and insurers that focuses on providing patients with access to the cancer treatment that is best for them. Ackerman Cancer Center will host an Awareness Day on Wednesday, July 26<sup>th</sup>.

For more information about proton therapy at Ackerman Cancer Center, visit [www.ackermancancercenter.com](http://www.ackermancancercenter.com).

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About Ackerman Cancer Center

Ackerman Cancer Center’s mission is to be the first resource where patients turn when diagnosed with any type

of cancer. Ackerman Cancer Center provides the most advanced radiation oncology treatment available, in a compassionate and respectful environment. A highly trained staff of radiation oncologists and medical professionals provide convenient access of care at three locations across Northeast Florida. Learn more at [www.ackermancancercenter.com](http://www.ackermancancercenter.com).

#### About the Alliance for Proton Therapy Access

The Alliance for Proton Therapy Access is a nonprofit advocacy group made up of patients, their families, physicians, clinicians, caregivers and others who advocate for fair and timely access to proton therapy. The Alliance is committed to ensuring that all patients receive timely, fair, and transparent decisions from their health insurers, and that these patients have access to the treatment plan recommended by their physician. To learn more visit [www.allianceforprotontherapy.org](http://www.allianceforprotontherapy.org).