

Dear HealthWell,

My dad was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in early 2019, but kept it hidden from his family. Throughout the year, dad looked more worn down, but he would always say he was fine. He fractured a couple ribs, but we all attributed it to his job (he was a mechanic who owned his own business for over 40 years).



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
RENE, JACKSON (6-MONTH OLD), JAMES,
NICOLE, ELI (FRONT, 11-YEARS)**

This past February, my mom, sister, and myself were made aware of his diagnosis and my sister started going to doctor appointments with him. In mid-March, we convinced him, after many different conversations, to try the treatment. The copay would be approximately \$2,700 for one two-week course and he would need six courses. He agreed because of the flexibility he had in choosing how aggressive it was; knowing that he might be able to withstand the financial burden because of a grant he received from the HealthWell Foundation; and because his family was there for him.

On March 25, my dad broke his sternum and several ribs just by standing up. His bones became so brittle from the myeloma -and on April 1, my dad was sent to a nursing home for physical therapy. This was during the time in which all nursing homes were on lockdown from COVID-19. No visitors in or out. There my dad stayed for 21 days deteriorating with no one there. My sister fought to have the medication delivered to her house so that he could start his

treatment in the nursing home. That took 10 days and, finally, on April 10, he started his treatment for the myeloma.

Dad only finished one, two-week round of the treatment. On April 21, my dad was released from the nursing home only to die at home nine days later, on April 30. He was only 69 years old.

Now, we all know what multiple myeloma is capable of. It slowly turns your bones to swiss cheese and, without treatment, you will start to fracture and break bones doing the simplest of things. This disease is also extremely painful and cruel. I wish someone told my dad these things back in 2019. Maybe he'd still be here.

The grant that my dad received could have saved his life. Because of this, my sister and I donated back to HealthWell in hopes that it saves someone else's father. I miss him every day.



Nicole (Stillwater, MN)
Daughter of James M. (Irwin, PA)
Multiple Myeloma Grant Recipient

**IN LOVING MEMORY
APRIL 1951 - APRIL 2020**