



## BMT & CELLULAR THERAPY PROGRAM

Dear Family and Friends:

When a loved one is having a Blood or Marrow Transplant (BMT), it is common for people around them to want to help. People undergoing transplants face unique challenges. We have written this letter to share some ideas that have been helpful to other people. Please feel free to make copies and distribute this letter to others.

Having a BMT often results in added costs that are not covered by insurance, such as temporary lodging and travel expenses to and from Ann Arbor before, during and after transplant. Other costs can include lost wages, and medical and prescription expenses not covered by insurance. You can help your family member/friend financially by:

- **Buying gas cards or gift certificates:** For food or shopping to help offset medical expenses.
- **Holding a fundraiser (via an event or online):** Events can be a spaghetti dinner at a church or community center, a simple money collection, raffles, auctions, golf outings, car washes, or even a bowl-a-thon. **Online** fundraising is tax deductible and easy ([www.bonemarrow.org](http://www.bonemarrow.org), [www.helpHOPElive.org](http://www.helpHOPElive.org), [www.transplants.org](http://www.transplants.org)).
- **Donating cash via Venmo or another digital wallet app:** Venmo is free to use. Credit card payments are subject to the 3% transaction fee that the card company charges, but debit card payments and transfers from a users' balance costs nothing.

Of course, financial help is not the only way to offer support. Other ways are:

- **Providing home and family care:** Organize neighbors, friends, extended family and/or church members to help with meals at home, grocery shopping, lawn or garden work, snow removal, chores, laundry, childcare or pet care. Offer babysitting to give the parent(s) a break, or to give their children extra attention.
- **Donating sick time:** If you work with the patient or their caregiver your company may allow you to donate your Paid-Time-Off (PTO). This allows them additional time-off without losing regular income.
- **Creating or maintaining social media updates:** If the patient is agreeable, create a support page in their honor ([www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org), [www.lotsahelpinghands.com](http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com), [www.mylifeline.org](http://www.mylifeline.org)).
- **Visiting in the hospital or at home:** Ask the caregiver if and when it is okay to visit. The patient will have a compromised immune system for up to one year after transplant, so *please do not visit if you are ill or have been exposed to others who are ill.*
- **Offering other gifts of caring:** Simple things mean a lot. These can include: prayers or meditations when appropriate, a book or DVD, hugs, a listening ear, silk flowers (**live flowers and plants are not allowed**), cards, letters and emails, or small gifts.

If you are interested in additional information, please contact the appropriate social worker below.

Sincerely,

Jack Harrington, LMSW

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