

# Hockey star and family champion clinical research after losing parents

Cam Neely, a four-time all-star hockey player for the Boston Bruins from 1987 to 1996, was smashingly successful on the ice. But the talent that helped bring his teams to victory could not help save his parents from the cancer that took their lives. So Cam, his brother Scott, and sisters Shaun and Christine pulled together as a family and set out to help advance the clinical research process.

In 1997, Cam, now VP of the Boston Bruins, and his brother, Scott Neely, founded the Cam Neely Foundation for Cancer Care, part of the Tufts Medical Center in Boston. Now, all four siblings are involved in different aspects of the organization.

Scott Neely, who spoke at CISCRP's fifth annual AWARE for All - Clinical Research Education Day in Boston in October, 2009, described the events that led them to establish the Foundation.

"Our parents were diagnosed with cancer within six months of each other, and it had a devastating impact on the four kids," said Scott, who serves as Executive Director of the Foundation. Their mother, Marlene Neely, died in 1987 of colon cancer; his father, Michael Neely, died in 1993 of brain cancer.

"Our experience during our parents' treatment was very difficult," says Scott. "When you walked into the hospital, you felt like you were a number. It was a cold process.

"When you enter a hospital and you have cancer, you have a whole lot of fear and different emotions," says Scott. "That was horrifying to us when trying to deal with everything. It made us realize we wanted to keep other people from having the same experience."

The Cam Neely Foundation includes the Foundation, the Neely House, and the Neely Cancer Fund. The Neely House contains eight beautiful apartments where families can stay while their loved ones receive medical care. Over 3,000 families have stayed there since it opened. The Neely Cancer Fund supports treatment

and research efforts, including the Neely Center for Clinical Cancer Research.

The Neely Center for Clinical Cancer Research focuses on experimental new treatments not yet available to the public. "Usually because of red tape, patients have to wait 6 to 12 weeks to get into a trial," says Scott. "Our mission is speeding access to new protocols." In one instance, a leukemia patient received an experimental drug in 24 hours, rather than the typical wait of 6 weeks after getting a prescription. "Trying to get the drug to the patient was a long process and at that stage, the patient often doesn't have a lot of time," says Scott. "We understand how frustrating it can be for a family when they're trying to save a life."



**THE CAM NEELY FOUNDATION FOR CANCER CARE**

*Providing comfort, support, and hope to cancer patients and their families*

Getting access to experimental new treatments without a long-wait brings hope and could be lifesaving for current and future patients, says Scott.

"Sometimes you have to be a guinea pig, but the main message is you are not only helping yourself and your condition, but helping people down the road."

Cam and Scott have become shining examples of people who want to help further clinical research in ways other than being a trial volunteer. Their example of working to raise money and awareness for research and families seeking treatment has inspired many people help further clinical research.

To find out more information on the Cam Neely Foundation please visit [www.camneelyfoundation.com](http://www.camneelyfoundation.com)

To contact The Cam Neely Foundation for Cancer Care please call 617-346-5900 or email [dlavoie@camneelyfoundation.org](mailto:dlavoie@camneelyfoundation.org).