

## A message from Frank V. Sacco, FACHE, President and Chief Executive Officer

Good day,

**When a young patient found himself facing a devastating cancer diagnosis, he searched for answers, hope and healing. At Memorial Cancer Institute, he found all three – thanks to dedicated, compassionate people who treated his disease and cared for his spirit.**

Thank you,



Dear Mr. Sacco,

I am a 32-year-old cancer survivor and a current patient of Dr. Lyle Feinstein. I was just 27 years old when I was diagnosed with a rare germ cell cancer. When cancer hits you in your 20s it's just so hard to find hope. I found the ordeal especially hard since almost all the survivor stories were from older people, and even the patients I was treated with were much older than I was. That's why I want to share my story – to help give hope to other cancer patients who are younger.

I had always been very active and lived a healthy lifestyle, so when I started having chronic colds, fevers and night sweats, I knew I had to see a doctor.

When they told me I had cancer, I kept thinking *that* word shouldn't be in my vocabulary. I was really scared. It hit me like a brick – you're not supposed to get cancer at 27. I worked out, I didn't smoke, I went to church, and there was no history of cancer in my family. I wanted to find someone who could offer me hope. I searched the Internet and contacted several area hospitals.

I remember walking into the Memorial Cancer Institute and being really scared. I looked around in the waiting room and saw other cancer patients and that's when I realized I was sick, too. Thankfully, everyone from the valet attendant to the receptionist was very kind. At Memorial you are not a statistic, you're treated like a guest in a home.

Dr. Feinstein was very straightforward with me – I needed surgery, chemotherapy and more surgery. Most importantly, he listened and gave me hope. I knew I'd made the right choice.

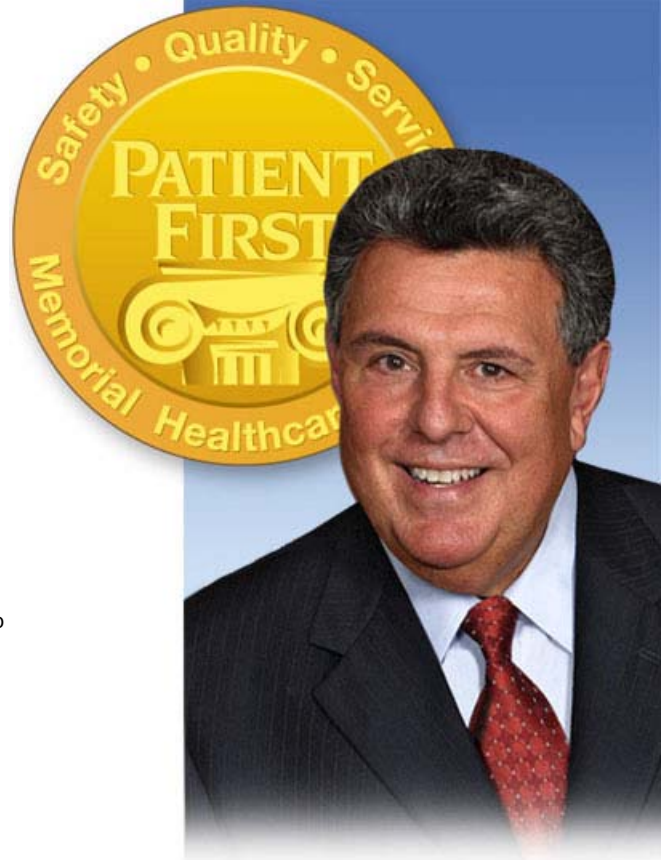
I immediately had surgery to remove fluid from around my heart, and they implanted a port for chemotherapy.

The six months of chemo was brutal. I was admitted during chemotherapy, then home for short breaks. I felt completely wiped out. At a time when I was physically, mentally and spiritually broken, the Memorial team gave me hope.

Once the tumor had reduced, I had another surgery to remove it. And because the tumor had attached to my lung and heart sac, they also took out those affected parts.

Next, Dr. Feinstein recommended more chemotherapy.

That was hard news to take. At first, I was upset, but I knew Dr. Feinstein had my best interest at heart. The doctors, nurses and staff – everyone at Memorial Cancer Institute helped save my life and I



was ready to make the most of my life in return.

It's been five years since my Memorial journey began and my follow-up tests show I'm cancer-free. I'm married now and have a 2-year-old son, and we're expecting another son this month.

Not only did Memorial save my life, but they gave me new life, too. My first son was born there and my next one will be, too. I feel so blessed. We are truly a Memorial miracle family.

Sincerely,

Diego

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