

# Patient Advocate Corner

## The R.A. Bloch Cancer Foundation

By Rosanne B. Wickman

*“Having cancer is bad enough! Not knowing what to do about it is even worse.”*

—Richard A. Bloch



In 1978, Richard A. Bloch (the “R” in H&R Bloch) was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer and told that he had 3 months to live. Instead of accepting a death sentence, he fought back. He found an oncologist who treated him aggressively, and 2 years later, Bloch was declared cancer free. He devoted the rest of his life (until his death as a result of heart failure in 2004) to helping people fight—and beat—cancer.

The R.A. Bloch Cancer Foundation’s goal is to help people diagnosed with cancer achieve the best and quickest possibility of recovery. We advocate getting a second opinion upon diagnosis and becoming well educated about cancer and its treatments. Our mission is to help people diagnosed with cancer to seek prompt, proper, and thorough treatment. Founded in 1980, the R.A. Bloch Cancer Foundation offers free services, and we never solicit financial donations from the people whom we serve.

The Bloch Cancer Hotline, 800-433-0464, provides peer-to-peer counseling by phone to callers through our national network of nearly 500 cancer survivors by matching callers with someone who has survived the same type of cancer.

Volunteers in our Kansas City, Missouri, office answer calls and e-mails from around the world. Our home volunteers

provide firsthand information, inspiration, and support to patients who need to hear that they, too, can survive. Callers can leave messages at night, and we monitor and return calls on weekends.

We always are looking for more volunteers so we can provide as close a match as possible and information on the latest treatments and procedures. We prefer survivors who are at least a year or 2 past the end of their active treatment, and who have a desire to reach out to others going through cancer.

The hotline distributes, individually and in bulk, three books Richard and Annette Bloch wrote for cancer patients and their supporters: *Guide for Cancer Supporters*, *Cancer. . . There’s Hope*, and *Fighting Cancer*. Treatment and support organizations from coast to coast give our books to their patients and clients. All the books are free, although we ask a small fee for cases of books to cover the shipping charges.

Our Web site, [www.blochcancer.org](http://www.blochcancer.org), provides a link to the National Cancer Institute’s (NCI’s) Physician Data Query (PDQ) program, which provides people with the most current information available on specific cancers and their treatments. Early in his cancer-fighting efforts, Richard Bloch conceived of and helped NCI set up its PDQ capability. Visitors to the Bloch Foundation Web site also can find the text of the Blochs’ books, as well as other information for patients and supporters.

The R.A. Bloch Cancer Foundation also works with groups in metropolitan areas to create Richard & Annette Bloch Cancer Survivor Parks. More than 20 of them have been dedicated throughout the United States, and more are in development in the United States and Canada, reminding all who pass that “cancer” is a word, not a sentence.

*Rosanne B. Wickman is hotline director for the Bloch Cancer Hotline at the R.A. Bloch Cancer Foundation in Kansas City, Missouri.*

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