

My name is Geraldine Parkin and my husband Tim was a patient treated by Farid Fata. He was first diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's Large B-Cell Lymphoma at St. Joseph's Hospital in February, 2009. We were sent to Fata for a second opinion. Tim began CHOP-R chemotherapy for 8 cycles rather than the standard 6 cycle regimen. He then received 2 years, 52 treatments, of Rituxin maintenance. Standard protocol is 16. Tim survived and is in remission at this time still suffering from the side effects. The treatments caused Tim to experience severe back and bone pain, which has never gone away. He no longer has an immune system. Tim was unable to work for nearly a year and had to go back to work at a lower paying job, causing us to lose our home to foreclosure and to live in a mobile home. Even though it was the most challenging experience in our lives, we felt blessed that Tim survived.

On August 6th, 2013, we learned about Farid Fata's arrest on the news. We were shocked and devastated. I immediately thought about the 100s of other patients and families that might be going through the feelings we were having and formed a Facebook group called "Patients and Families Treated by Dr. Fata" so we could have a place to share our experiences. We have grown to 1,482 members. I also arranged for a conference meeting where over 700 people came.

Since his arrest, members of our group have expressed their grief, their fears, their losses, their guilt, their frustration, their distrust of the medical community and their need to DO SOMETHING. These are a small sample of the things people have expressed:

"I am angry because I have so many unanswered questions."

"Today I have a heavy heart."

"My ten year old grandson told me today that he is angry with fata because he never got to grow up with Papa"

"I've had to stop working after my employer had to call 911 twice in 4 weeks."

"Society and people need to get this and I don't know why they don't."

“My wife didn't get a chance”

“I have a hard time trusting any Dr. that I am sent to now.”

“Sometimes I wonder if I am like I am because of fata or if I really needed it or could have taken another route. Now I'm stuck with a colostomy and hernia”

“So much time, so much faith in someone and his office, and then it is like being hit by a car.”

“I haven't told anyone else this, but I have been having nightmares, where my husband blames me for taking him to Fata.”

“Does the state even care?”

“I should have listened to my GUT & took my mom out of there.”

These types of comments are common as so many patients, families and friends are trying to cope with this. Together we have tried to understand what has happened, why it happened and to support each other. We have become an Army of One.

We found out about an oncology nurse, Angela Swantek, who is with us today, had reported fata in 2010 to the state and he was able to continue torturing and killing patients because after 13 months of what looks like taking no action, they didn't think fata was doing anything wrong "HE was HARMING patients" . We sent letters and emails to our state representatives, senators, the governor, and the attorney general trying to get help. Very few of our elected politicians responded; we felt like no one cared. We felt like the system failed. In November 2013, Attorney General Bill Schuette's office invited a group of us, after a petition stating our frustrations went public, to discuss our concerns. Rather than address our concerns about the state's lack of protection, the state officials seemed to want to justify or make excuses for their lack of protection of citizens. It was like rubbing salt into a wound.

It is inconceivable to us that Michigan's oversight and laws are not sufficient enough to protect us, the consumers of medical care. LARA's Bureau of Health Care Service mission statement is "The mission of the Bureau of Health Care Services is to protect, preserve and improve the health, safety and welfare of Michigan's citizens through the licensing and regulation of health professionals, health facilities and long-term care facilities. The Bureau is designed to make our regulatory system simple, fair and efficient while at the same time protecting Michigan's vulnerable population." It has failed the patients subjected to Farid Fata.

I would like to thank Representative Jeff Farrington, Pat Somerville, Klint Kesto, and Peter Pettalia for sponsoring bills that are aimed at protecting us from physicians who engage in intentional acts of fraud or deceit that harm patients. And thank you for your support by voting on these amendments.

We look forward to your efforts in changing current laws that will required the Bureau of Health Care Services to process allegations thoroughly so no one will needlessly become a victim to a doctor's wrong-doing like the victims of Farid Fata were. We look forward to laws causing hospitals' administrators to face criminal charges when they ignore complaints. We look forward to laws that mandate healthcare facilities to be required to make concerns about doctors' poor actions, including out of court settlements, to be made public and easier to report. We look forward to your continued efforts to assure the citizens of Michigan that our health care system is safe.

This is only a start. Michigan needs to look at so much more and change it. It needs to be ENFORCED there will be NO tolerance for this to EVER happen again so we can REST IN PEACE knowing our children & grand children will be safe in the medical world!

Thank You for listening.