



## **“Adopt a Patient” Blood Cancer Awareness Month 2017**

Hi, I'm Dr. Brian Koffman. I'm the founder and the medical director of the non-profit CLL Society. And I'm here to share some notes with you because September is a big month in the leukemia and lymphoma world.

September is Blood Cancer Awareness Month. And September 15th, specifically, is World Lymphoma Awareness Day. The Leukemia Lymphoma Society, the Lymphoma Research Foundation, the Lymphoma Coalition, the United Kingdom's Leukemia Care, and many other charities around the world are trying to raise awareness of blood cancers. This month we, at the CLL Society, are working with our fellow charities around the globe to also increase blood cancer awareness.

CLL has a very special place in this world, as CLL is both leukemia and a lymphoma. So, what does all this mean to us? Us patients?

Well first of all, since early diagnosis can improve quality of life and even save lives in some blood cancers, it's important to know the presenting symptoms. Fatigue is the most common symptom in most blood cancers, including chronic lymphocytic leukemia. Though CLL is a little different, because there are often no symptoms at all at the time of diagnosis, and it's found in just a routine blood test. Other symptoms that may show up in CLL, and in other blood cancers, are swollen lymph nodes, easy bruising and bleeding, shortness of breath, recurrent infections, bone and joint pain, and unexplained night sweats and weight loss. In CLL the situation is a little different. Early diagnosis helps ensure a proper treatment plan is formulated. But, honestly, it's usually less critical than in the more aggressive acute blood cancers.

Because CLL is a chronic cancer, usually slow growing, that gives us time to best plot a strategy. Our awareness effort at the CLL Society, therefore, is more focused on the appropriate steps to take once the diagnosis is made. Our goal is to ensure that everyone gets the proper care at the proper time, and everyone is aware of their best personalized care options; options today that are quickly changing and improving. Being up-to-date is critical in CLL these days. For CLL patients, our website, our weekly alerts, our quarterly newsletters, our live support and education groups, our research on what patients really need, our educational forums across the country, are helping to ensure that patients are aware and have access to the latest and best treatments. Through this, we are saving lives.

Your donation of \$100 will help us adopt one of the 20,000 newly diagnosed CLL patients this year. Your gift will provide each patient and family with the educational and support services they need to ensure they have the longest and best possible quality of life.

Our motto for blood cancer awareness month is, “The more aware, the better the care.”

Thank you. Stay strong. We are all in this together.