

Health: Brain Cancer Awareness

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PHILADELPHIA (CBS 3) - Senator Edward Kennedy had a deadly form of brain cancer, diagnosed just over a year ago. Doctors say malignant brain tumors are on the rise. It wasn't Kennedy's first battle with cancer.

Two of his children had different kinds of cancer, which inspired his mission of reforming health care. Senator Kennedy's daughter, Kara, had a cancerous lung tumor in 2003. And when he was just 12, Edward Junior lost a leg to bone cancer in 1973.

Senator Kennedy said getting to know other patients during his son's chemotherapy, who couldn't afford treatment, inspired his mission to reform health care.

"I think we're filled with hope that something positive can come out of this tragic loss," said Chris Grundner, who lost his wife Kelly to a brain tumor when she was just 31-years-old. She had symptoms like headaches and dizziness for six months before she was finally diagnosed, then it was too late.

"We were uneducated about the disease and unfortunately her primary care physician was uneducated too, so the brain tumor was the last thing we thought," said Chris.

In memory of his wife, and to save others from the pain she endured, Chris set up the Kelly Heinz-Grundner Brain Tumor Foundation to raise awareness.



"This should be on your radar, and it doesn't discriminate against age, race, sex, socio-economic status. Everyone is a potential candidate, so it's not one of those disease you can kind of ignore," said Chris.

20 brain tumors are diagnosed every hour and the numbers are growing. Chris says more people need to know that.

And Senator Kennedy said his family was lucky in being able to afford treatments, but millions aren't. His life mission was changing that with health care reform.