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33p

Recovering cancer patient tells MPs NHS should back robot

OFFICER'S FIGHT FOR CYBERKNIFE

BY NICOLA IRWIN

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A HEALTH campaigner has taken his fight for a pioneering cancer treatment to Parliament.

Alan Bowley, a Staffordshire Police sergeant based in Leek, was in London yesterday to champion the use of CyberKnife within the NHS.

He underwent treatment with CyberKnife in Washington, in the U.S., two years ago when doctors in Britain told him his cancer was inoperable.

Mr Bowley, known as Stan to his friends, has set up The Stan Bowley CyberKnife Trust, to raise funds for the treatment which can cost upwards of £30,000. The charity funded his own treatment.

Yesterday Mr Bowley, a married dad-of-three, addressed the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Medical Technology.

Mr Bowley, of Dorset Close, Congleton, told MPs: "We feel very strongly about CyberKnife.

"We have the charity to promote the awareness and to bring CyberKnife to the UK within the NHS for the benefit of others.

"It's frustrating that this treatment isn't available in the UK. From a patient perspective, it's absolutely fantastic.

"You're not at risk of infection and CyberKnife delivers a high dosage of radiother-

apy without damaging other organs. I fully agree the NHS should support this."

The meeting was chaired by Dr Desmond Turner, MP for Brighton, Kemptown and Peacehaven.

CyberKnife is a robotic radiosurgery system, which can target tumours from multiple positions and angles without the need for open surgery.

Dr Turner said: "We are here to encourage the NHS to make the best use of medical technologies in terms of possible outcomes for patients and savings for health trusts.

"This seems to me to represent a quantum advance over present devices. It would be rather nice if the NHS did acquire this machine."

Since February, the treatment has been available in the UK at

The CyberKnife Centre in London's Harley Street.

But patients are unable to have the procedure funded by the NHS and the health service has yet to purchase any machines for its own use.

Dr Turner vowed to write to the secretary of state and the chairman of NICE (National Institute of Clinical Excellence), which approves drugs and technological treatments for NHS use, telling them of the benefits of the treatment.

Congleton MP Ann Winterton, who has supported the Bowleys since they first tried to get NHS funding for the treatment, was also present, although not a member of the group.

She believes more MPs and ministers need to be aware of CyberKnife.

Lady Winterton told *The Sentinel*: "I have suggested they ask for a meeting with the Secretary of State and we raise the issue in the House of Commons.

"There's no doubt that this is a valid way of treatment, which has proven success."

Mr Bowley's sister, Pamela Bowley, aged 39, of Hilton, in Derbyshire, was there to support her brother.

She said: "There was a lot of good responses and he did really well.

"It made me feel proud."

Mum Cynthia Green, aged 65, of Burton-on-Trent said: "It's an achievement to get here and it seemed pretty positive.

"We would like to see CyberKnife on the NHS and other people benefit from it."

Father's American tale: Pages 6&7



CAMPAIGN: Alan Bowley in front of the London Eye before yesterday's meeting at Parliament. Picture: Clare Jennings

Verdict on JCB worker

AN open verdict has been recorded at an inquest into the death of a 39-year-old former JCB worker.

Richard Walters died at his home in October 2008.

His sister, Belinda Latimer, told the inquest that she fought to get help for Mr Walters, of Stoke, after she noticed he was neglecting himself.

But coroner Iain Smith said that as there was no clear cause of death, he could not be sure whether he died due to natural causes, a medical problem or because he wasn't eating properly.

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Villagers in crossing talk

SCORES of traders and residents were today due to attend a consultation event over plans to move a pedestrian crossing.

Businesses in Tean fear relocating the High Street crossing will swallow up parking spaces and passing trade.

Campaigners against the work urged villagers to make their views known during the two-day consultation.

See Page 4

Staff axed as salons close

STAFF at a chain of hair salons arrived at work only to be told the business was shutting down.

Workers at two branches of John English Hairdressing also say that instead of receiving their wages at the end of this week, they have been told only to expect statutory redundancy pay.

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