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Grand Aerie Fraternal Order of Eagles
c/o Mrs. Michelle McCarthy
1900 S. Goldenrod Road
Orlando, FL 32822

Dear Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to request your support for University of Health Florida and Dr. Barry Byrne's research program in Pompe disease. Dr. Byrne invented the first treatment for this life-threatening condition in 2005 and has been working tirelessly since then to develop new therapies. His most promising work is a gene therapy that tries to fix the genetic errors causing Pompe disease. However, he cannot do this without your help. You have already proved yourselves heroes to Destiny, the granddaughter of your fellow Eagle Melanie Day, by raising funds for her fight with Pompe disease. Now we are asking you to take your efforts to the next level by making sure that patients like Destiny can receive the same kinds of life-saving therapies that she did.

Muscular dystrophies like Pompe disease break the 'machinery' inside muscle cells causing people to get weaker and weaker. In the case of Pompe disease, muscle cells keep taking in a key energy source, glycogen, but they don't have the right enzyme to break it down. Eventually, so much glycogen builds up in the cells that they can no longer function properly. This is a matter of life and death as we need healthy muscles to help us breath and pump our blood. Most children born with Pompe disease, like Destiny, won't live to see their first birthday without the right treatment. At UF Health, Dr. Byrne has already helped Destiny to breathe on her own with his gene therapy drug, but he needs advanced laboratory equipment to produce more. Only certain machines can produce the large amounts of the drug needed for clinical trials, and without clinical trials, researchers cannot turn medical research into treatments that everyone can access.

Dr. Byrne and his team are asking the Eagles to help buy the lab equipment they need for these clinical trials. Any funds donated by the Eagles will go exclusively towards the purchase of laboratory equipment. No funds will go towards administrative expenses. Donations from the Eagles have already made such a difference for Destiny and her family, and now the Eagles have a chance to work through Dr. Byrne at UF Health and bring relief to Pompe disease patients everywhere.

Warm Regards,

Benjamin Valentine
Assistant Director of Development
UF Health Office of Development
