

BWH Bulletin

For and about the people of Brigham and Women's Hospital

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DF/BWCC Patient, Playwright's Experience Inspires New Play

Prominent New York playwright Elizabeth Egloff has used her experiences as a cancer patient to shape her most recent play, "Ether Dome."



Elizabeth Egloff

The play, which is being performed by the Huntington Theatre Company in Boston through Nov. 23, details the conflict between the inventors of anesthesia at MGH in 1864.

Egloff, who has been involved in the theater industry for 25 years and written eight plays, first came to the Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center (DF/BWCC) in 2005, several months after being diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia, a cancer which originates in the bone marrow. At the time, she had begun writing "Ether Dome," but had to put the project aside to focus on her health.

At DF/BWCC, Egloff was cared for by Richard Stone, MD, director of the Adult Leukemia Program, and prescribed a drug to treat certain types of leukemia. She was in remission for a year, but relapsed and learned that she would need a bone marrow transplant.

"Dr. Stone went above and beyond to get me into a clinical trial, and he and Dr. [Robert] Soiffer, who handled my transplant and post-transplant care, have been so kind to my whole family," said Egloff. She also mentioned the kindness and patience of her nurses, especially with her two young boys, who would sometimes come along for her treatments.

Egloff received a bone marrow transplant in May 2006. Though the journey to recovery was difficult, she remains overwhelmingly positive about her treatment in Boston. "I can't say enough about the doctors and nurses at the Farber and the Brigham," she said. "They not only gave me a transplant, but they kept me together emotionally."

Egloff has since moved back to New York, where she can focus completely on playwriting. She says her patient care experience not only had an impact on her personal life, but also affected her professional work. She picked "Ether Dome" back up in 2009, and this past summer, the play opened at La Jolla Playhouse in California. It's now playing in Boston, the city where Egloff received life-saving care and got a second chance to pursue her passion and life's work.

"Ether Dome" is playing through Nov. 23 in the Calderwood Pavilion at the Boston Center for the Arts. Hospital employees can receive \$10 off tickets to any performance by mentioning the offer when calling the box office at 617-266-0800 or using the code "ETHER" online at huntingtontheatre.org.

