

UPDATE: Congressman Steve Scalise to Undergo Stem Cell Transplant

House Majority Leader Scalise was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a blood cancer. The lawmaker plans to return to DC in February.

January 14, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

UPDATE: House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-La.) will undergo a stem cell transplant to treat his multiple myeloma, a type of [blood cancer](#). His office [released the following statement](#) on January 5:

“Last month, Leader Scalise successfully completed induction chemotherapy and had a positive response. It has now been determined he is eligible for an autologous stem cell transplant. He is currently undergoing the transplant process, marking a significant milestone in his battle against cancer. Once the procedure is completed, he will be recovering under the supervision of his medical team and will work remotely until returning to Washington next month. He is incredibly grateful to have progressed so well, and is thankful to his entire medical team, family, friends, and colleagues for their prayers and support.”

An autologous stem cell transplant refers to a procedure that uses your own cells to replace the damaged ones. The healthy cells are returned to the body after the patient undergoes chemotherapy or radiation. In allogeneic transplants, by contrast, the healthy cells are obtained from a donor.

Regarding Scalise’s physical absence from the House of Representative, [CNN notes](#) that “At the start of the new year, Republicans control just 220 seats while Democrats control 213, a narrow majority that means the House GOP can afford only a few defections on party-line priorities. That majority is poised to shrink even further by the end of the month with Ohio GOP Rep. Bill Johnson set to resign on January 21 to take a new job as president of Youngstown State University.”

Below is our original September 13 news item titled “Congressman Steve Scalise Diagnosed With Blood Cancer, Begins Treatment”:

House Majority Leader Steve Scalise (R-La.) has been diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a type of

[blood cancer](#), and is undergoing treatment, according to a [statement from his](#) office.

After having blood work done in August, the congressman was diagnosed with [multiple myeloma](#), a “very treatable,” [relatively rare form of blood cancer](#) that develops in plasma cells in the blood marrow.

The [Louisiana](#) Republican has started treatment that will continue for “the next several months.” He added that he expects to continue to work and return to Washington to act as majority leader while undergoing [treatment](#).

About 35,000 new cases of multiple myeloma are diagnosed annually in the United States, according to the [American Cancer Society](#). Blood cancers (the other major types are leukemia and lymphoma) are easier to treat compared with cancers that form solid tumors, and they can sometimes be put into long-term remission.

“I am incredibly grateful we were able to [detect this early](#) and that this cancer is treatable,” Scalise’s statement reads. “I am thankful for my excellent medical team, and with the help of God, support of my family, friends, colleagues, and constituents, I will tackle this with the same strength and energy as I have tackled past challenges.”

A number of Scalise’s colleagues have offered him and his family encouragement and support.

“The same faith, family support, and internal strength that made Steve such an inspiration to others after he was shot will bring him through this illness and once more inspire us all,” said Senator Bill Cassidy (R-La.) in an [official statement](#), referring to the [2017 shooting](#) at a Virginia baseball field during which Scalise was shot in the hip.

“I spoke with him today and he’s in good spirits, as nothing—not a gunshot and certainly not cancer—will stop him from accomplishing what he sets his mind to,” House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) [wrote on X](#), formerly known as Twitter.

For related content, click [#Multiple Myeloma](#) , where you’ll find [A Multiple Myeloma Cancer Diary](#). For more information, visit Cancer Health’s [Basics on Blood Cancer](#). It reads in part:

What are blood cancers?

Cancer develops when cells grow out of control. Blood or hematologic cancers affect blood cells, bone marrow or the lymphatic system. Most blood cancers involve white blood cells, but red blood cells (responsible for carrying oxygen) and platelets (responsible for blood clotting) may also be affected. Compared with many other types of cancer, blood cancers affect a wider range of ages, including children.

Leukemia, lymphoma and multiple myeloma are the major types of blood cancer. These are classified according to the type of cells involved, how fast they grow and whether they affect

adults or children. The various types of blood cancer are treated differently and have different prognoses, or expected outcomes.

What are the risk factors for blood cancers?

Risk factors for blood cancers include family history, certain genetic disorders, smoking and exposure to radiation. People treated with radiation or chemotherapy for other types of cancers are at higher risk for developing leukemia. People with HIV and those taking immune-suppressing drugs are at higher risk for lymphoma. Epstein-Barr virus (a virus in the herpes family) is associated with certain types of lymphoma.

How are blood cancers diagnosed?

A blood test known as a complete blood count takes an inventory of the different types of blood cells. A sample of bone marrow or lymph node tissue (a biopsy) may be collected to examine in a lab. Cancer cells may look abnormal under a microscope and have certain genetic mutations. Once cancer is diagnosed, various types of imaging scans or other tests may be done to see whether it has metastasized, or spread to other parts of the body, including the brain and spinal cord.