

## IN TODAY'S BUSINESS SECTION

**DRUG DEAL:** Mass. gets a cut of Merck's \$58M settlement over deceptive Vioxx advertising. **Page 20**

**CHECK THAT:** Traveling carnivals must get their Yo-Yo amusement rides inspected before operating them here. **Page 20**

**MONEY CHANGING:** Vending and cash machine companies foresee problems if U.S. currency is changed to accommodate the blind. **Page 21**

## INDEX

Ask Amy, Horoscope .....	37
Business .....	20-23
Classified .....	41-51
Comics, Puzzles .....	38-39
Editorials .....	18-19
Food .....	26-30
Inside Track .....	14-15
Lotteries .....	53
Obituaries .....	24-25
Racing .....	52
Television .....	37
The Edge .....	31-36
Weather .....	37

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# PRAYERS FOR TED



# Nation in shock as Teddy faces the fight of his life

By **DAVE WEDGE**

The nation rallied to the side of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy with an outpouring of support from the streets of Boston to the White House as news of his cancer crisis was met with prayers that he'll beat the odds in his life-or-death fight.

"Ted Kennedy is a man of tremendous courage, remarkable strength and powerful spirit," President Bush said. "We join our fellow Americans in praying for his full recovery."

Back in the Bay State, Kennedy's constituents were already rooting for him in his battle with a malignant brain tumor. Calling Kennedy "one of the great statesmen of all time," Medfield lawyer Paul Stanton said, "He's overcome a lot of tragedy in his family so hopefully he can fight this and continue on."

The public caught the first glimpse of the senator yesterday since a seizure sent him from his Hyannis compound to Massachusetts General Hospital Saturday morning — and led to his just-revealed cancer diagnosis.

Kennedy's tumor is a malignant glioma in the left parietal lobe, the section of the brain that controls various sensory activity, including the ability to speak and motor function.

In photographs released by the Associated Press, Kennedy, 76, appeared relaxed and smiling, dressed in a gray sweater and dark slacks, sitting at a table in a family room at the hospital with his wife, Vicki, and other family members surrounding him.

He is expected to remain in the hospital for several days but there was no word on the possibility of him returning to the Senate seat he has held for 46 years.

Kennedy's sons, Patrick, a Rhode Island congressman, and Ted Jr., as well as daughter Kara and nephew Joe, who served Massachusetts in Congress, were at his side yesterday.

"He's comforted by the fact that his dad is such a fighter, and if anyone can get through some-

thing as challenging as this, it would be his father," a spokeswoman for Patrick Kennedy said.

Close friend and political analyst Bob Shrum said, "The whole family is there. People are laughing and telling stories and jokes. It's not very different from the way the family usually is."

Kennedy rose to prominence in Washington in the 1960s and pressed on even after burying his assassinated brother, President John F. Kennedy and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

His battle with the deadly, aggressive tumor marks the latest chapter in the storied clan's tragic history and prompted speculation the "liberal lion" may have just months to live. Yet his doctors reported yesterday that he is "in good spirits and full of energy."

But there is a rough road ahead. Treatment could include surgery, radiation and/or chemotherapy but "decisions regarding the best course of treatment for Senator Kennedy will be determined after further testing and analysis," his medical team said.

"He's got the strongest will I've ever seen," said Boston City Councilor Rob Consalvo, who served as an aide to Kennedy in Washington for five years. "He'll fight it every step of the way and he'll continue to fight for the people of Massachusetts any way he can."

The news hit hard in Washington where Kennedy's Senate colleagues sat in stunned silence or collapsed in tears on Capitol Hill.

"Ted, Ted, my dear friend. I love you and I miss you," said a weeping West

Virginia Sen. Robert Byrd, his head deeply bowed as he spoke on the Senate floor.

Byrd, 90, a fellow Democrat, is the only living senator who has served longer than Kennedy.

Kennedy's Bay State colleague, Sen. John F. Kerry, said, "Every one of us knows what a big heart this fellow has. This guy is one unbelievable fighter."

Kennedy had returned to a full Senate schedule following surgery in October 2007 to clear a blocked artery in his neck and has been campaigning across the country for Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.).

*Jessica Van Sack, Hillary Chabot and Herald wire services contributed to this report.*



**LOVING FAMILY:** Sen. Edward M. Kennedy is surrounded by family yesterday at Massachusetts General Hospital. From left, son Patrick, stepson Curran Raclin, son Teddy Jr., daughter Kara and wife Vicki.

AP PHOTO

## Courageous kid says senator can beat the odds

By **MARIE SZANISZLO**

He was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor when he was 21 months old and given six months to live.

Nine years later, Michael Sampson has a simple message for his state's senior senator:

"I would tell him not to give up," the Middleton 11-year-old said of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, whose doctors yes-

terday announced he has a brain tumor.

The happy-go-lucky fifth grader who plays baseball and a mean trumpet wants Ted K to know that it is possible to beat the odds, even when the odds are extraordinarily high.

"They didn't think I would make it," Michael said he would tell the senator, "and I'm doing great."

Kennedy has been diag-

nosed with a malignant glioma, which experts describe as the worst kind of brain cancer.

But Michael's family insists even experts can be wrong.

"Ninety percent of the battle is in your head," said Michael's mother, Jodi Sampson. "If you can remain positive and focus on the good, it'll prevail."

Michael was first hospitalized as a baby with what his

parents believed was a stomach virus.

"The doctor said, 'Go to Mass. General. They'll have him out by the end of the night,'" Sampson said.

A head scan revealed Michael had a large, rapidly growing mass inside his brain. It would be a month before he would leave the hospital.

Doctors removed the primitive neuroectodermal tu-

mor, but the cancer had spread through Michael's nervous system. Even after chemotherapy and a stem-cell transplant, doctors prepared his parents for the worst.

"When he was 3, they said he wouldn't live to 4. When he was 4, they said he wouldn't live to 5," recalls Sampson.

And now, she said, "He's been cancer-free for five years."