



**“I have an appreciation for life I’ve never had before.”**

**Mark Boughton  
Mayor, Danbury, Conn.**

**Robert Friedlander, MD**  
Neurosurgeon



# MAYOR BEATS DANGEROUS BRAIN TUMOR

**M**ark Boughton is a busy man. His daily routine as the mayor of Danbury, Conn. consists of countless meetings, hundreds of phone calls and emails, and barely enough time to squeeze in a quick lunch.

Describing himself as “an extremely energetic person,” Mark was always ready to tackle whatever lay ahead of him. But one day that all changed. “I started to get extremely tired in the middle of the afternoon for no reason,” Mark says. “This just wasn’t how my body functioned.”

As time went on, Mark’s exhaustion continued and he began having terrible headaches. Then, something happened that made him extremely worried. He lost his vision for 25 minutes.

## Rare Diagnosis

Mark immediately went to the emergency room, where doctors found a mass the size of a lemon inside his brain. The mass was later determined to be an epidermoid cyst, or tumor, which forms during embryonic development. A cluster of skin cells gets trapped and grows slowly over the years, until the cyst starts to cause symptoms like the headaches, exhaustion, and vision loss that Mark experienced. While it wasn’t cancer, the cyst would continue to grow and cause devastating symptoms, including increasing vision loss and the inability to speak.

“What good is a mayor who can’t communicate?” he asks.

Mark consulted with numerous doctors in Boston and New York, and repeatedly was given the name of Dr. Robert Friedlander, chairman of the UPMC Department of Neurosurgery.

“We have great doctors and hospitals in this area,” Mark says. “But after speaking with Dr. Friedlander and learning more about his expertise, I knew that he was the right guy.”

## A Complex Surgical Approach

Because the cyst in Mark’s brain was surrounded by important brain tissue and arteries, Dr. Friedlander used an advanced brain imaging technology known as High Definition Fiber Tracking (HDFT) to determine the best approach to surgery.

“During the surgery, HDFT played an important role because we used the scans as a roadmap to navigate around important brain structures and remove the cyst,” Dr. Friedlander says.

When Mark woke up in the intensive care unit, Dr. Friedlander was there to tell him that the cyst was completely gone. “I shouted and pumped my fists when he told me that,” Mark says.

## Back to City Hall

In a little more than a week, Mark returned home and picked up right where he left off — at City Hall.

“I wanted to get right back to work,” Mark says. “I did only a few hours a day at first, but then I was able to get right back to working full time, just like I had been before any of this started.”

Now, as Mark gears up for a run for governor, he’s thankful that the team at UPMC successfully removed the cyst and got him back to feeling 100 percent.

“I have an appreciation for life I’ve never had before,” he says. “Dr. Friedlander and everyone at UPMC were truly incredible. They’re the best in the world at what they do. Period.”