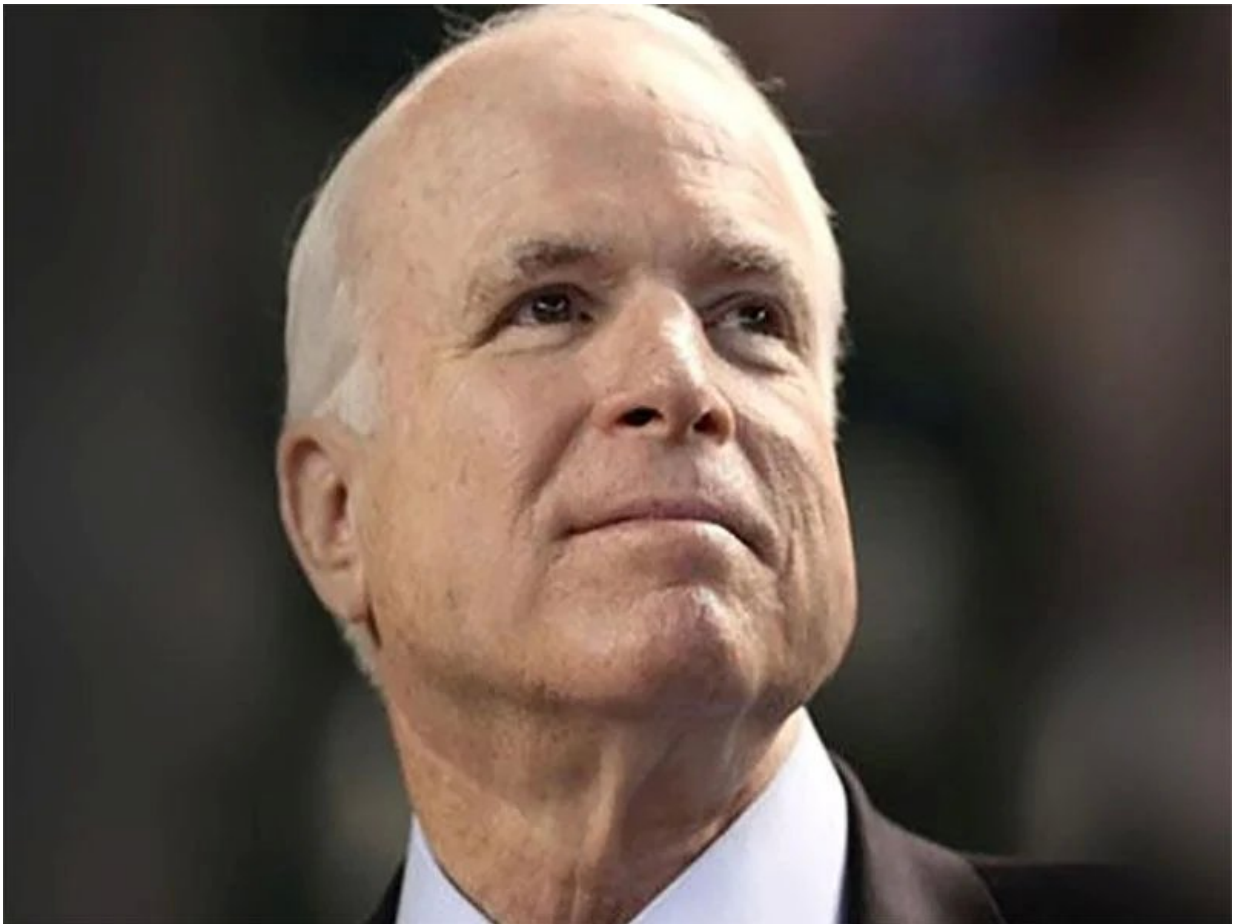


# John McCain no longer receiving treatment for terminal brain tumor

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(HealthDay)—Senator John McCain's long battle with brain cancer may

be nearing an end, with his family announcing Friday that he will no longer receive treatment for the condition.

The 81-year-old Republican Arizona senator and hero of the Vietnam War had been undergoing treatment for an aggressive glioblastoma since July of 2017, *The New York Times* reported.

"Last summer, Senator John McCain shared with Americans the news our family already knew: He had been diagnosed with an aggressive glioblastoma, and the prognosis was serious," his family said in a statement. "In the year since, John has surpassed expectations for his survival. But the progress of disease and the inexorable advance of age render their verdict. With his usual strength of will, he has now chosen to discontinue medical treatment."

One [brain](#) cancer expert who's not involved in McCain's care outlined the senator's likely condition.

"We can speculate that Senator McCain is worse neurologically and made it clear, now or beforehand, that if that happened, he would elect to have [palliative care](#) only," said Dr. Michael Schulder, who helps direct neurosurgery at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, N.Y.

"If there is any silver lining in this cloud, it is that patients who die from [glioblastoma] rarely have severe pain," he added. "They gradually become less alert and most often die from pneumonia or sometimes from the direct effect of increased pressure on the brain. Palliative care can alleviate any discomfort that patients do feel."

McCain has been largely absent from Congress and Washington, D.C., since December, and sources told the *Times* that his family has gathered in Arizona, and death may be near.

His illness hasn't stopped McCain from being a political force, however. Earlier this year he criticized President Donald Trump after a summit meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, for example.

McCain is the son and grandson of four-star Navy admirals and as a soldier spent five years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. Over the past few decades he charted a swift rise in politics, both as Arizona senator and as the 2008 Republican nominee for the Presidency against Barack Obama.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), glioblastomas "are the fastest growing" of a subcategory of brain tumor known as gliomas. "These tumors make up more than half of all gliomas and are the most common [malignant brain tumors](#) in adults."

Each year, almost 24,000 Americans will be diagnosed with a brain or [spinal cord tumor](#), and nearly 17,000 die from these tumors each year, the ACS said.

Schulder explained that "the course of glioblastoma progression is very different from patient to patient. Based on the [tumor](#) biology, some patients succumb to the disease within months, most live between one and two years, and some live for many years in good condition after diagnosis and treatment."

Dr. John Boockvar directs the Brain Tumor Center at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. Although he is not involved in McCain's care, he said that the senator's "survival is in line with expectations from the time of his diagnosis. These are difficult decisions for the family at this time. I would measure his survival in weeks, not months."

**More information:** Michael Schulder, M.D., vice chair, neurosurgery, North Shore University Hospital, Manhasset, and director, Northwell

Health's Brain Tumor Center, Lake Success, N.Y.; John Boockvar, M.D., vice chair, neurosurgery, and director, Brain Tumor Center, Lenox Hill Hospital, New York City; *The New York Times*, Aug. 24, 2018

There's more on brain tumors at the [U.S. National Cancer Institute](#).

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