

“Home Alone” Santa Gets Surgery for Mouth Cancer Thanks to GoFundMe

Actor Ken Hudson Campbell lost his insurance in the SAG-AFTRA strike. He “burst into tears” from the financial support for treatment.

December 20, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

Actor Ken Hudson Campbell, known for playing Santa Claus in the 1990 holiday blockbuster Home Alone, is in “very good condition” after [crowdfunded cancer surgery](#) to treat a tumor in his mouth. Specifically, Campbell was diagnosed with [squamous cell carcinoma](#), a common and typically not life-threatening form of [skin cancer](#). In Campbell’s case, the operation removed part of his jawbone and required reconstructive surgery along with radiation treatments and skin grafts.

“It was a big tumor in his mouth,” Campbell’s daughter Michaela [told People](#). “The last two years he’s gotten lots of biopsies done and they’ve tried to control it. And it was only this year that it just got very, very aggressive.”

I never thought I’d be posting this. Thanks to my wonderful family.

Posted by [Ken Hudson Campbell](#) on [Friday, December 1, 2023](#)

Squamous cells are the flat cells in the upper level of the epidermis (basal cells lie below them). Squamous cell carcinomas can grow anywhere on the skin—including the skin that lines the mouth and lips—but they are most common on sun-exposed areas, where they’re caused by too much exposure to ultraviolet radiation, according to the [Mayo Clinic](#). Squamous cell carcinomas are more likely to spread compared with other skin cancers, but this is still uncommon.

Campbell, 61, known also for small roles in Armageddon and Groundhog Day, reportedly lost his SAG-AFTRA health insurance in January 2022 and therefore anticipated large out-of-pocket costs for his cancer treatment and recovery.

The [GoFundMe page](#) Michaela organized on her father's behalf has raised almost \$119,000. Several celebrities donated, including Steve Carell, who donated \$10,000; Tim Meadows; Big Bang Theory cocreator Bill Prady; Jeff Garlin; and more.

"The first day we posted it, every time he read something, he would just burst into tears," Michaela said of her dad. "It was the first time he really got emotional about the whole situation. It was kind of a shock to him to feel so loved."

On December 9, Michaela updated the GoFundMe page, explaining that the carcinoma had been successfully removed after a 10-hour surgery that removed part of his jawbone, lymph nodes and part of a leg bone, which was used to reconstruct his jaw.

Michaela said doctors removed all the cancer, so he won't need chemotherapy; however, Campbell will have radiation treatment, followed by a costly six-month recovery, including dental implants, physical therapy and skin grafts.

"It really means the world," Michaela said. "My family's been struggling for a long time financially. So just having my dad's friends come together, this is just very overwhelming and it really takes a lot of stress off of my family's shoulders."

To read more, click [#Squamous Cell Carcinoma](#). There, you'll find headlines such as "[A Skin Cancer Diary: From Mohs Surgery and Radiation to Immunotherapy](#)," "[High-Tech Screenings May Miss Skin Cancer in People with Darker Skin](#)" and "[Washington Football Coach 'Riverboat Ron' Rivera Battles Squamous Cell Carcinoma](#)."