

# Jimmy Carter announces he is cancer-free

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PLAINS, Ga. (BNG)—Former President Jimmy Carter announced he is cancer-free, four months after revealing cancer removed from his liver had spread to four spots on his brain.

Carter, 91, released a statement through the [Carter Center](#) saying his most recent MRI brain scan did not reveal any signs of the original cancer spots nor any new ones.

He will continue to receive regular three-week treatments of pembrolizumab, a new drug used with effective results against some forms of cancer by harnessing the power of the body's own immune system.

## **Told his Sunday school class**

Carter first shared the good news on a Sunday morning at the Sunday school class he teaches at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga.

“The first time I went for an MRI, the four places were still there, but they were responding to the treatment,” Carter said on [video](#) posted online by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. “And when I went this week, they didn’t find any cancer at all. So, I have good news.”

“A lot of people prayed for me, and I appreciate that,” the 39th president and Nobel Peace Prize winner commented. “So, that’s what I’ve been doing. I wanted to tell you the good news, because that happened this week.”

In addition to his humanitarian work at the Carter Center and with Habitat for Humanity, Carter is convener of a movement called the New Baptist

Covenant, which is working to unite Baptists in the United States across racial and theological lines to work together on common concerns.

Hannah McMahan, the New Baptist Covenant coordinator, said Carter plans to attend the next NBC national meeting, April 18-20 in Atlanta.

“President Carter means so much to so many in our Baptist family,” McMahan said. “We have been praying for him and are now eager to celebrate with him.”

### **Diagnosed with melanoma**

Diagnosed with Stage IV melanoma, Carter said in August he thought he had only weeks to live but after meeting with doctors was “surprisingly at ease.”

“Now I feel it’s in the hands of God, whom I worship, and I’ll be prepared for anything that comes,” he said in an Aug. 20 news conference at the Carter Center.

Melanoma most commonly is identified with skin cancer but in a small percentage of cases like Carter’s can show up first on internal organs. It is treatable if discovered early, as it usually is, but can be difficult to treat if it has spread to other parts of the body.

New therapeutic options combining immunotherapy and radiation are vastly improving outcomes with advanced melanoma, without the severe side effects associated with chemotherapy.

The new treatments are expensive, however. Keytruda, Merck’s brand name for pembrolizumab approved by the FDA in 2014, costs \$12,500 per patient per month, or \$150,000 a year.

After his diagnosis, Carter said he finally was cutting back on activities, but he actually increased his teaching schedule at Maranatha Baptist Church.

The congregation set up a new system to accommodate the increased volume of visitors but is now back on regular visitor guidelines and no longer issuing advanced tickets or seating assignments on Saturday.