

VIDEO AUDIO

My name is Dr. Richard Dulude. I'm a physician, but more importantly, I'm Alec's dad.

Alec was bright, adventurous, and deeply kind. He was an athlete and an engineering student who loved the outdoors—from rowing at Oregon State to fighting wildfires. He had a true zest for life.

Then, in his early twenties, something changed. Alec developed debilitating headaches and physical symptoms that soon spiraled into a severe psychiatric crisis.

As a physician, I knew how to navigate the system, yet we could not find an answer. Over several years, Alec received more than 20 psychiatric diagnoses and was prescribed 25 different psychiatric medications. He endured 30 emergency room mental health crisis visits and nine psychiatric hospitalizations. Still, he kept getting worse.

We finally discovered Alec had *Bartonella*. With antibiotics, we began to see our son reappear again—his humor returned, and he even organized a family ski day. We had hope. But the diagnosis came too late.

On March 31st, 2023, during a psychotic episode, Alec overdosed. Despite all critical care interventions we lost Alec the next day. He was only 27. After his death, *Babesia*, *Borrelia*, and *Bartonella* were found in his brain tissue.

As a doctor, this is incredibly difficult to live with. I blame myself for not finding the care Alec required.

Since 1913, we've known that an infection caused by the spirochetal bacteria syphilis can cause neuropsychiatric illness. Science now understands that nearly 100 infections can cause serious mental illness. Yet syphilis is still the only organism screened for in the psychiatric population. This needs to change.

My wife Pam, and I co-founded Alec's Place to raise awareness so that another family might find answers sooner. I can't change what happened to my son, but I can tell his story. That is Alec's legacy.