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## Reader's view: Day helps focus awareness of NET?cancer

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Apple founder Steve Jobs and I don't have much in common — except that we both were diagnosed with neuroendocrine tumor of the pancreas. Despite his enormous financial resources, Jobs died of this rare disease in 2011. I have lived with this condition since 1998, when I had surgery to remove the 14-centimeter (5.46 inches) tumor on my pancreas. A recurrent tumor emerged in 2004, and it remains a daily culprit. Yet I am alive and thus committed to raising awareness of NET cancer.

The third worldwide NET Cancer Awareness Day is today, and Gov. Mark Dayton proclaimed it Minnesota NET Cancer Awareness Day in Minnesota.

Neuroendocrine tumors grow primarily in the gastrointestinal system but can arise in the pancreas, lungs or other organs. NETs are generally slow-growing, so it often takes many years to detect. Unfortunately,

90 percent of all NETS are incorrectly diagnosed and treated for the wrong disease, and the average time to proper diagnosis exceeds five years. The prevalent symptoms of NETs are abdominal pain, flushing, diarrhea, wheezing, bloating, heart palpitations, weakness, skin rash, heartburn and weight changes.

To learn more, go to [netcancerday.org](http://netcancerday.org). There is also a Minnesota NET cancer support group whose website is [northwoodsnet.org](http://northwoodsnet.org).

November is also Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month with purple as the designated color. The symbol for NET Cancer is a zebra, since the disease is rare and often misdiagnosed. So during the month of November, I can be seen wearing a purple-striped zebra scarf to show my commitment to improving outcomes for those affected with pancreatic neuroendocrine cancer.

I will never have the impact Steve Jobs had on the world. But maybe, just maybe, I can improve the outcome of someone diagnosed with pancreatic neuroendocrine cancer.

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