University Transplant Center

Experts On Life.

A University Health System & UT Health Science Center Partnership | San Antonio

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Three decades strong

2016
DELIVERING INNOVATIVE CARE – THEN AND NOW

University Transplant Center, a partnership between University Health System and the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, has continuously delivered the highest level of care to patients with chronic organ disease since 1985. Our growing kidney, liver, lung and pancreas transplant programs have propelled our expert physicians and staff to lead us into the next phase of our expansion with specialty services in pediatric kidney and liver transplantation, liver and pancreatic cancer and tumor surgeries, advanced liver disease management, pulmonary hypertension, bronchoscopies, interventional pulmonary services and therapeutic endoscopy.

University Transplant Center has performed some of the most complicated cases in the region with excellent results. In 2015, the liver program’s patient and graft survival rates ranked top 10% in the nation and best in Texas. Our lung program’s survival outcomes were best in Texas and the amount of transplants performed were among the highest in volume in the nation. Our kidney program was best in South Texas and performed more kidney transplants in 2015 than seen in its history. We are the only program in South Texas to offer live donor liver transplantation. And our robust research division is making revolutionary strides in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of solid organ disease, which is helping influence the future of medicine.

As the needs of our community change, we remain committed to providing patients, caregivers, referring physicians, nurses, social workers and providers with the highest level of care. With 10 satellite clinics throughout Texas and new partnerships with specialized healthcare providers such as Renal Associates, PA, The Texas Liver Institute, South Texas Renal Care Group and Texas Tech University Health Science Center El Paso, our patients are assured access to quality healthcare within reach.

For three decades, our faculty and staff have been, and continue to be, national leaders in their field and pioneers in the advancements of chronic organ disease treatment and transplantation. Our comprehensive center offers patients peace of mind as our focus then and now — restoring people to a better quality of life.

Dr. Caliann Lum joined the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA) as the director of Organ Transplantation Programs and the first woman appointed to the surgical faculty team in 1985. Lum credits Dr. J. Bradley Aust, founding chairman of the surgery department, for providing her the means to begin building Texas’ first multi-organ transplantation program. Her vision was to offer kidney, heart, liver and pancreas transplants in one location. No other hospital in Texas offered such a range of transplants at the time. Dr. Lum was also instrumental in creating South Texas’ first civilian organ donor program this same year. This program is still going strong today.

Construction of Bexar County Hospital District's University Hospital in Alamo City's South Texas Medical Center was completed in 1968.

In April 2014, University Hospital opened a new 10-story, million-square foot Sky Tower with an expanded Emergency Department, 35 state-of-the-art surgical suites and 420 new private patient rooms.

University Hospital was strategically built adjacent to the UT Health Science Center Medical School to provide a place for healing, teaching and research at the hub of the medical center.
MILESTONE

University Transplant Center has performed 1,300 adult kidney transplants since 1985.

The expansion was made possible through $750,000 in donations from the University Health System Foundation and former patient Brad Moore — who got a liver transplant two years ago — as well as his wife, Michele.

Part of the donation also opens an endowment that will be used to support faculty salaries at the publicly funded hospital.

Wish speaks volumes about how things have changed since 1970, when Dr. J. Bradley Aust, then chief of surgery at the virtually new University Hospital, performed the still-uncommon and risky transplant procedure.

Kidney transplants had been done in the United States since 1963; Wilford Hall Medical Center surgeons did the first in San Antonio that same year. Wish was the first successful transplant in University’s program, which Aust established after coming to San Antonio from the University of Minnesota in 1969.

Dr. J. Bradley Aust, founding chairman of the surgery department of UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, performed South Texas’ first civilian kidney transplant to then-39-year-old Joan Glicksman Wish in 1970. Post-transplant, Wish became an active volunteer, an advocate for organ donor awareness, and mentor for other transplant recipients until her passing in November of 2007.

Joan Wish has made the most of the gift she got nearly 33 years ago from a young man who died before his time.

In the last three decades, Wish married, established a career in interior design, cultivated a multitude of friends and volunteered on behalf of organ donation awareness.

She still thinks about the young wife who signed away the kidneys of her husband, who had no brain activity, to give Wish a chance at life. And even though the stranger’s donated kidneys have sustained her for so many years, Wish has never learned anything about the couple’s circumstances or identity.

“T’m still very sorry that he had to lose his life so that I could continue mine,” said Wish, now 72, who was a guest Thursday at University Hospital. “I don’t know that I would be here today without that surgery.”

Wish helped christen a 4,400 square-foot, revamped unit that will provide new diagnostic and treatment areas for 70 full-time members of the hospital’s transplant team.

By Cindy Tumiel
San Antonio Express-News
Published August 16, 2002

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"We hope to be doing hearts by spring," Dr. Caliann Lum, director of organ transplantation programs, said Wednesday. Currently heart transplant candidates from San Antonio must travel to the Texas Heart Institute - St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston – or farther – for the procedure.

"In the next 12 months we will be doing livers," Lum said. "Somewhere in there we will be offering pancreas transplants, which we consider a more experimental procedure," she said.

Dallas Children's Hospital is the closest facility currently doing liver transplants, and only a handful of hospitals nationwide do pancreas transplants. The 37-year-old surgeon trained in transplantation at the University of Minnesota also said Medical Center Hospital and the University of Texas Health Science Center had formed its own organ donor program, the first in a civilian hospital in South Texas.

The program will cooperate with the non-profit, independent South Texas Organ Bank but will focus more on procuring a variety of organs rather than concentrating on kidneys. "The scaffolding is being laid for a much bigger organization," Lum explained.

The kidney transplant operations mark the reopening and revitalization of the hospital's previous kidney transplant program, which had done 50 procedures a year until it temporarily closed about 15 months ago.

The hospital's big plans pay off

By Mark Urrutia
San Antonio Light
Published October 3, 1985

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Man gets new heart, lungs
By Marjorie Clapp
San Antonio Express-News
Published August 21, 1987

Medical Center Hospital doctors transplanted a heart and both lungs into a 29-year old man who faced death without the operation, the first of its kind in San Antonio.

Recipient Bruce Jones Jr., a former Roosevelt High School student, was in critical condition Thursday and on a respirator but awake and writing notes to his family after the Wednesday operation.

His life, however, will hang in the balance for at least two weeks, which is the most critical time for rejection of the organs to occur. If all goes well, doctors say, he could be discharged from the hospital within three or four weeks.

Only about 150 heart-lung transplants have been done worldwide. Heart and double-lung transplants may well offer hope in the future for saving the lives of selected victims of cystic fibrosis, an inherited disease causing mucus that plugs up the lungs, producing infection and also resulting in heart damage.

Performing the historic operation here was a surgical team headed by Dr. J. Kent Trinkle, professor of cardiothoracic surgery at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Trinkle also led the team that performed San Antonio’s first heart transplant April 27, 1986. The woman who received the heart at that time, Catherine Hooker, then 56, is now doing aerobics and walking three miles a day.

“I hope it won’t be long before Jones is doing the same thing,” Trinkle said at a press conference.

Bruce Jones Jr. appreciates spending time with his daughter, Corey Renee.
Transplant patient sets stage for other kids

By Mark Linsalata
San Antonio Light
Published February 1988

The first child to undergo a kidney transplant at Medical Center Hospital in recent years is being hailed as a pioneer in what promises to be a wide range of transplants available for children at the hospital.

The Floresville boy, Marcelo Castro, 7, who weighs just 33 pounds because of complications of kidney disease, ate his first banana Wednesday as he rapidly recovered from the procedure performed a week ago.

“We’re really happy it happened,” the boy’s father, Marshall Castro, 28, said Wednesday in the intensive care unit at Medical Center.

The child’s mother, Rachel Castro, 25, was at the family’s home recuperating from donating one of her kidneys to her son. The boy’s own kidneys were deformed at birth, and the child began suffering from failing kidneys when only three months old.

“It’s a pioneer because he is setting the stage for other families who will follow,” Project ABC Executive Director Marian Sokol said. “Hopefully, it will not just be pediatric kidney transplants. It will also be livers and hearts.”

The boy’s kidney specialist, Dr. Sudesh Makker, confirmed that liver and heart transplants for children were expected to be performed soon at Medical Center and that pancreas transplants were also possible.

“The facilities exist now to do these things, and we have the appropriate staff to do them,” Makker said.

Marcelo looked happy and stuffed Wednesday as he rested in bed after downing a hearty lunch of spaghetti and meatballs topped off with a banana for dessert – a treat the child had not previously been allowed because his kidneys were unable to filter out the high amount of potassium found in the fruit.

View full article at UniversityTransplantNews.com

MILESTONE

University Transplant Center has performed 223 pediatric kidney transplants since 1988.

Alexandria Martinez
Kidney Recipient, 2006
Referred by: Dr. Mazen Arar, San Antonio, TX

Lee Peterson
Kidney Recipient, 2002 & 2008
Referred by: Dr. Rafaat Porter, Norfolk, VA

Ashton Porter Balyeat
Kidney Recipient, 1999
Referred by: Dr. Said Elshihabi, Marietta, GA

University Transplant Center has performed 223 pediatric kidney transplants since 1988.
A close call with death

By Janet Wilson
Austin American-Statesman
Published February 10, 2002


Two days before, she had gone to a doctor’s appointment. Weak and short of breath, she was afraid she was headed for the hospital. She had even packed a bag.

But she wasn’t totally honest with her doctor about how she felt, so he sent her home, telling her to come back Monday.

By Sunday morning, Valentine’s Day, she had no energy, like she was “free-floating.”

She called Kim Tyson, a longtime friend who lived nearby. Tyson rushed to Lee’s house and called EMS, who arrived just in time, as Lee was going into respiratory failure.

Although Lee had quit her Texas years earlier, emphysema continued destroying tiny air sacs in Lee’s lungs that normally exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide. As her condition worsened, less oxygen and more carbon dioxide stayed in her system. She was short of breath and very weak. Emergency medical technicians tried to stabilize her, rushing her to Seton Hospital’s emergency room.

A tube, attached to a ventilator, was placed down her throat to her lungs, allowing the machine to breathe for her. Versed, Ativan and morphine kept her quiet, sedated and still.

“It was a really scary time,” remembers Tyson, who followed Lee to the hospital. “She was so vulnerable.”

For two weeks, Lee lay in intensive care. Her brother Rich flew down from her hometown of Baltimore, sitting by her side from morning to night. Holding her hand, he told her how much her mother and Jack and Pat and Linda (her brothers and sisters-in-law) loved her. And he prayed.

“Her condition was so critical I was afraid to leave her side,” Rich Kelly says.

Friends dropped by, but Lee, still unconscious, never knew.

Twice priest gave her last rites.

View full article at UniversityTransplantNews.com
Woman receives liver transplant

By Don Finley
San Antonio Express-News
Published December 3, 1992

A long-awaited liver transplant program for civilians finally was launched in San Antonio with the successful transplant operation involving a 45-year-old man’s side from Canyon Lake, officials revealed Wednesday.

Zenobia Clary received a new liver in a 16-hour operation Nov. 16 at Medical Center Hospital. She was listed in fair but guarded condition Wednesday.

Another half-dozen patients are candidates for the procedure, and a second transplant could be done within two weeks, officials said.

“I think it’s a tremendous benefit for the people of San Antonio and South Texas,” said Dr. Glenn Halff, assistant professor of surgery at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Halff headed the operation team.

Clary’s liver was destroyed by hepatitis C. Her husband, Rick Clary, said his wife became ill in September.

“At first, she was just real tired all the time. Then her stomach started swelling up. She got kind of scared and went to the doctor in San Marcos, and he referred her to Dr. Halff,” her husband said.

No information about the human donor was disclosed.

Halff, a San Antonio native and the son of Alamo Title Co. President Alex Halff, was recruited by the health science center in July.

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Resurrected Days, Resurrected Nights
By Brad Dodson
Hepatitis Volume 4. No. 1
Published January/February 2002

After overcoming obstacles such as drug addiction and jail time, music legend Freddy Fender now faces hepatitis C and kidney failure in a fight for his life.

To his fans, Freddy Fender is a Southern blues legend. Some might even call him immortal if they did not know the irony attached to the term. Because — as Freddy’s true fans knew — failing kidneys and a battle with hepatitis C have brought this beloved star down to Earth in a fight for his life.

On a recent Saturday afternoon in Louisiana, Freddy’s fans packed themselves into the main foyer of the Isle of Capri Casino — ignoring the lure of the slot machines just feet away — just to catch a glimpse of him before his evening concert. A rumor has circulated that this might be the last public performance in a career that has spanned five decades, and it is hard to tell who would miss the other more: Freddy or his fans.

“It gives me a feeling of professional accomplishment,” Freddy says of the assembling throng who are waiting to rush the concert hall for the best seats, “and at the same time, a humble feeling of gratitude.”

When the wait is finally over, and Freddy — guitar slung over his shoulder — strides on stage and up to the microphone, it seems as if talk of his early demise is certainly premature, until he reminds the audience himself.

“I’m very happy to be here tonight... Of course, I’m very happy to be anywhere tonight!” he proclaims before breaking into his first song of the night — the appropriately titled Tell It Like It Is.

Before the show is over, Freddy will have everyone out of their seats and dancing in the aisles.

Inocencio Osoria
Liver/Kidney Recipient, 2007
University Hospital, El Paso, TX
Referred by: Dr. Pradeep Kumar, Austin, TX

Jimmy Eddington
Liver/Kidney Recipient, 2015
University Hospital, El Paso, TX
Referred by: Dr. Pradeep Kumar, Austin, TX

Narcisco Luna Jr.
Liver/Kidney Recipient, 2012
University Hospital, El Paso, TX
Referred by: Dr. Pradeep Kumar, Austin, TX

MILESTONE
Dr. Glenn Halff performed South Texas’ first civilian combined liver/kidney transplant in 1994. This operation was one of only 86 combined liver/kidney transplants performed that year in the United States. Today, University Transplant Center is ranked in the top 10% in volume out of 122 centers in the nation offering this type of procedure.

University Transplant Center has performed 116 combined liver/kidney transplants since 1994.

2016 CALENDAR

JULY

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

26 27 28 29 30 1 2

3 4 5 6 7 8 9

10 11 12 13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20 21 22 23

24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Independence Day

View full article at UniversityTransplantNews.com
A second chance at life
By Christiane L. Dahl, APR

For University Hospital transplant recipient Terri McCrae, Easter and its message of rebirth had a special meaning this year. The new kidney and pancreas she received at University Hospital have given the severely diabetic woman what she calls a “second chance at life.”

On Monday, April 3, 1995, McCrae, a San Antonio resident for 20 years, made history as the first person to receive a combined kidney/pancreatic transplant at a civilian hospital in Central and South Texas.

The 34-year-old woman received her new kidney and pancreas during a seven-and-a-half hour transplant operation at University Hospital. Dr. Robert M. Esterl Jr., transplant surgeon at University Hospital and assistant professor of surgery, The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, led the 11-member surgical team who performed the uncommon combined organ transplant.

McCrae is doing well after her successful transplant and is expected to go home by the beginning of May.

“Too receive a second chance at life at 34 years old is a blessing,” McCrae said. “The opportunity was given to me and I’m glad I was able to take it. I am so thankful to Dr. Esterl and to God, for He is really responsible for everything. Life is going to be different.”

A transplant was McCrae’s only hope of controlling the progression of her debilitating complications from Type I insulin-dependent diabetes, which she has had since she was 10 years old. She was suffering from the devastating effects of kidney failure, retinopathy (eye disease), neuropathy (numbness and feeling in the feet), bladder neuropathy (the bladder empties slower than normal) and gastroparesis (slow emptying of the stomach, which causes nausea).
University Health System performs 100th liver transplant

By Jennifer Miliken
Published November 22, 2000

For the first time since the University Health System and The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA) Liver Transplantation Program began in 1992, 100 liver transplants have been performed in a single year.

Only seven hospitals in the entire country performed 100 or more liver transplants last year. This achievement places the Health System in some very good company, including Mt. Sinai Medical Center, the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and UCLA Medical Center.

The 100th liver transplant recipient is Alan Rangel, who celebrated his first birthday on Thursday, December 7. Because of a genetic disorder, both he and his 4-year-old sisters need liver transplants. His sister is still on the waiting list, and there are currently about 15,000 people in the United States waiting for liver transplants. UTHSCSA President Dr. Francisco Cigarroa performed Alan’s transplant.

Alan’s transplant is just half of the exciting equation. Director of organ transplantation at University Hospital, Drs. Glenn Halff and Robert Esterl split the donated liver and transplanted the majority of the organ into the hospital’s 99th liver transplant recipient for 2000, a 61-year-old woman. The outcomes for liver transplant patients at University Hospital are significantly better than the national averages. In fact, the United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS) reports the transplants at University Hospital have significantly higher survival rates than would be expected given the characteristic of the recipients and donors.

Dr. Francisco G. Cigarroa, surgical director of the pediatric transplantation programs and Dr. Robert M. Esterl Jr. performed South Texas’s first civilian pediatric liver transplant in 1997. Alan Rangel (pictured below) was University Transplant Center’s 100th liver transplant recipient in 2000. He and his sister were transplanted nearly 6 months apart when they were toddlers due to an inherited disorder. We are currently the only pediatric liver transplant program in South Texas.
Split liver transplant benefits two patients

By Will Sansom
The News, Volume XXX Number 8
Published February 21, 1997

For the first time in the state of Texas, a donated liver has been split and successfully transplanted into two separate liver transplant recipients.

Dr. Glenn Halff, director of organ transplantation programs at the Health Science Center; Dr. Francisco Cigarroa, assistant professor of surgery at the Health Science Center; and Dr. James Eason of Wilford Hall Medical Center split the liver of an organ donor. Dr. Halff transplanted the larger portion of the liver into a middle-aged female and Dr. Eason transplanted the smaller portion into a 5-month-old boy.

The surgeries were performed on Jan. 8. Dr. Halff performed his eight-hour surgery on the first recipient at University Hospital, and the operation on the second recipient was performed at Wilford Hall.

The second recipient’s father is in the U.S. Marine Corps and is stationed in Southern California. Wilford Hall Medical Center is the transplant center for all military-related liver transplant operations and, as a military dependent, the child was sent to San Antonio for the surgery.

“The liver is unique in its ability to continue to grow to appropriate size in both recipients,” Dr. Halff said. “Dr. Eason and I had recently discussed the feasibility of doing a split liver transplant, and the health of this organ in this particular donor, together with the severity of the illness of the patients, seemed to make this an ideal time to try this procedure.

“There is a severe shortage of donors,” Dr. Halff continued, “and this organ-splitting procedure can help us more effectively deal with the shortage of organs. Patients are frequently dying while they are waiting for a transplant. This is one innovation that can help save at least some lives each year.
Converge
Donating body parts seemed unreal — Especially if the donor were still alive
By Amanda Gallagher
Telefonos Published December 2002
A team of surgeons hovered over a body, meticulously separating blood vessels and tying bile ducts. They removed a large portion of a liver, wheeled it into the next room, and gave it to Raymond Barnes. The transplant would end over a decade of health problems. Meanwhile, doctors in the first operating room tended to the donor. But this patient wasn’t headed to the morgue—she was still very much alive.

In an incredible, but increasingly popular, procedure, Kristin Barnes donated 64 percent of her liver to her father. But unlike traditional organ donation, Barnes was healthy and expected to survive.

She is one of hundreds of people who have participated in living-related organ donation—a process that’s shortening the endless organ waiting list and saving scores of lives.

Kristen Barnes grew up in an ordinary household. She was the middle of three daughters and had a great relationship with her dad. “I was sort of the honorary boy,” Barnes said. “I was always the one who went fishing with him. I helped him fix things around the house.”

But she never thought she’d save his life. Her father, Raymond Barnes, developed liver disease almost 40 years ago. “I acquired it through the use of a chemical, but no one is sure which one,” Raymond said. “I did nuclear weapons maintenance in the army. We used a lot of cleaning solvents from different chemicals. Quite a few of us had this problem.”

By Amanda Gallagher

MILESTONE
University Transplant Center has performed 35 live liver donor transplants since 1999.
A lifesaving swap has two families miles apart feeling very grateful
By Stephanie Serna – Reporter
KAT-Eye
Reported November 26, 2015

But instead of feeling down on his luck, he is grateful to a man in New York after receiving a new kidney from him. Next to him is Kraft’s daughter, Amanda DeSoto, 35, who is also recovering after she donated her kidney to that man’s brother.

“I really want to thank the Lord, said Kraft. “I have a lot to be thankful for.”

Three years ago, Kraft’s kidneys failed and DeSoto wanted to help by donating her kidney to him.

“I can’t explain it,” said Kraft. “It’s deep love, evidently where you are willing to risk your life and give everything you’ve got for you dad, it means a whole lot.”

However, DeSoto was not a match for her father. At the same time, in New York, Eric O’Brien had been hoping to donate his kidney to his brother, Keith O’Brien, but he was not a perfect match for him.

So, through a national “paired exchange” program, De Soto’s kidney went to Keith O’Brien.

And, his brother, Eric O’Brien’s kidney went to DeSoto’s dad, Jim Kraft.

“Thank you,” said Keith O’Brien, addressing Amanda DeSoto. “It’s an unbelievable gift that you have given to me and that my brother has given to your father. You guys are heroes.”

“I think it’s a huge testament to how much of heroes our donors are because half of the kidney donors from the U.S. come from living kidney donors,” said Dr. Colleen Jay, director of the Living Kidney Donor Program at the University Health System. “Without living donors, we wouldn’t be able to do kidney transplants as we know it.”