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Getting *the* Most Out of Your Transplant Clinic Visit

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In today's busy world, we all "juggle" many tasks. Don't "drop the ball" by going to your Transplant Clinic appointment unprepared. This could lead to a dissatisfying experience where you went through the motions but didn't accomplish your goals ... and neither did your Transplant Team! I want to share some tips on how to get the MOST out of your University Transplant Clinic (UTC) visit.

Keep your appointments.

Your appointments are scheduled at a specific time for a reason. The Transplant Team keeps an eye on key markers such as your transplanted organ's function and blood levels of your anti-rejection meds. Your transplant doctor asks **you** to schedule your follow-up. If you miss appointments, then your Transplant Team isn't able to give you the best care.

If getting to your appointment in San Antonio is difficult, we also have remote Transplant Clinics in: Austin, Corpus Christi, Eagle Pass, El Paso, Laredo, McAllen and New Braunfels for your convenience. Ask your Post-Transplant Coordinator if you are interested in being seen at a remote clinic.

At the end of your visit you do NOT have a follow-up visit until you speak with the Administrative Assistants in the Waiting Room to schedule it. Generally we see you at UTC, at a minimum, at least once every year and usually more often than this.

A "must-do" when leaving the Transplant Clinic is to "check out" with the Administrative Assistants in the Waiting Area and schedule your next follow-up appointment.

**We operate satellite clinics in
Austin, New Braunfels, Corpus Christi,
San Antonio, McAllen, El Paso, and Eagle Pass.**



Come prepared.

In order to help you manage your medications, we must see all of your prescription bottles AND your Med List each time you come to the Transplant Clinic. Also bring anything you take over-the-counter (OTC) such as herbal supplements, natural products, vitamins and minerals. Remember to include “prn” meds (meds you take only when needed) also. The Transplant staff expects you to bring these with you to each visit.

Many people keep their “old” Med Lists for reference. For safety reasons, draw a diagonal line from the bottom left corner to the upper right corner on these older lists. This marking will alert us that these lists are NOT current, so we’ll only review your most up-to-date “real-time” list. Remember to do this with your wallet-sized Med Lists too! Both are available upon request from your Transplant Clinic Nurse.

Keeping up-to-date, accurate medication records with ALL providers at ALL times is a key component of long-term success after your transplant.

Know your stuff!!!

Bringing your prescription bottles and Med List to Clinic is one thing. Knowing how you take your medicine is another. It’s nice to have someone in your immediate household help you, but ultimately YOU should manage your own medications. People can assist you by: double-checking your work after you’ve set up your pillbox, asking you if you took your meds (as a reminder), and assisting you in ordering/picking up your refills from your pharmacy if you are not able to do so.

Once a medication dose is changed, you need to make these changes in your pill box by either adding or taking away medication. Some people only fill their medication boxes through the morning of their appointment so it is empty when they begin to fill with their new meds or doses after their clinic visit. Be sure to check the expiration dates on your drug bottles, especially if you’ve had your bottles for a while.

While there are some things others can help you with in medication management, it’s the responsibility of the recipient to take charge of knowing your meds, preparing them, and taking them on time.

Plan Ahead.

Because clinic appointments can be so busy it’s easy to forget to ask your Transplant Team a question that you may have. A great idea is to write your questions down ahead of time and bring them to your visit (date each list of questions, too!). Write the answers as you get them (or immediately after you leave) so you won’t forget what you were told. If you get home and are not sure of something that was said during your visit, call us back at **210-358-4500**.

If you’ve recently been discharged from a hospital, bring a copy of your discharge papers with you so we can update the transplant staff on your current health status and medication changes.

Bring a list of prescriptions that you need written or refilled. We can prepare them and have your doctor sign them at your appointment so you can then take them with you when you leave.

Use your time wisely.

Waiting for your appointment can be very boring. As you’re waiting at UTC, there are other things you can get done during this time. Some suggestions include going to the Cafeteria to have breakfast and take your meds AFTER your labs are drawn, going to the Pharmacy to order refills/ask a question, or meet with other transplant professionals such as the Transplant Social Worker or Patient Educator. These activities will help you fill this time and accomplish your goals. If you are leaving the clinic waiting area, remember to tell our administrative assistants at the front desk where you’re going and your contact number.

Allergy alert.

Any time you experience a new drug allergy, make sure to update the Transplant Team and Transplant Pharmacy on what medication was involved and what type of allergic reaction you experienced. Don’t forget to update your Medic Alert bracelet, necklace, or wallet card, too.

We can ALWAYS use good ideas so if you think of a way to make the MOST of your Transplant Clinic visit, then please call us at the Outpatient Transplant Pharmacy at 210-358-4630 so we can share them with others.

Dear Ann Livers,



Q: I heard the University Transplant Center *Genesis* Support Group is going away. Is this true and why?

A: The *Genesis* Support Group has been discontinued because it appeared to be no longer meeting the needs of our transplant population. Based on input from recipients and their families, we are in the process of replacing *Genesis* with a new mentoring program. This program will be run through our Patient Navigator, David Rodriguez.

You may be wondering: Am I really the “mentoring-type”? I think we take for granted the special experience we possess as transplant recipients and family members that we have to offer others. Even though I have been the official “educator” for many of you over the past 5 years, it has actually been the sharing of **your** lives and journeys with me that has educated me so I can better educate others! You can do it!

As transplant recipients, I believe we have a responsibility to make the most out of our “Gift of Life”, not only to honor our recipients and their families, but to give back to the transplant community as a whole. We do this through work with transplant volunteer organizations such as Vital Alliance and other transplant-related organizations, our involvement in transplant-related community activities and events (see the Save the Date column), and by living our lives in a manner that tells those around us, “Organ donation is a good thing and makes a positive difference in people’s lives... come be part of this”!

As transplant recipients, we have the unique opportunity to positively impact other people’s lives who are in various stages of their transplant journey because we are walking the same road. We meet them in the front lobby waiting for labs to be drawn, in the X-Ray and PFT lab, and in the Transplant Clinic waiting room. Many of you who have experienced transplant are already mentoring someone who needs your assistance to get through their journey. It is our hope that we can formalize this process through a University Transplant Center mentoring program.

To start this program, I am seeking volunteers to serve as “hosts” for our monthly pre-transplant classes. In this capacity, you and your support system will be available to welcome the attendees and share your personal journey before, after, and during the break. You will not have to “give a speech” during the program ... just be present to informally share your experience with those who are just beginning their journey. If you are interested, please contact me at darnell.waun@uhs-sa.com or call me at 210-567-5777 for date, time and location.

If you are interested in becoming part of the University Transplant Center Mentoring Program, contact David Rodriguez at david.rodriguez3@uhs-sa.com or 210-567-5777.



Visit **CDC.gov** to learn what you need to know about the west nile virus.

YOUR SAFETY IS IMPORTANT TO US!

Save the Date

San Antonio Walk for PKD

Saturday, September 22, 2012

Check-In/Onsite Registration: 7:30 AM

Penny Kids Dash: 8:15 AM

Walk Begins: 9:15 AM

Walk Distance: 1K and 5K

Brackenridge Park—Joske Pavilion
San Antonio, TX

www.walkforpkd.org/sanantonio

Vital Alliance 5k Run/Walk

Saturday, October 13, 2012

Check-In/Onsite Registration: 8:30 AM

Free Kid’s Fun Run: 9:30 AM

Walk Begins: 10:00 AM

Walk Distance: 1K and 5K

Brackenridge Park—Joske Pavilion
San Antonio, TX

www.vitalalliancetexas.org

Texas Kidney Foundation Walk ‘n Stroll for Kidneys

Sunday, October 28, 2012

Check-in: 1:00 PM

Walk Begins: 2:30 PM

Walk Distance: 1K and 5K

Registration: FREE

Pearl Brewery Amphitheater
San Antonio, Tx

www.txkidney.org

Clergy Symposium

Wednesday, October 31, 2012

Registration: 8:45 AM

Event: 8:45 AM – 12:00 Noon

Ecumenical Center for Religion and Health
8310 Ewing Halsell Dr.

San Antonio, TX 78229

www.txkidney.org

National Donor Sabbath

November 9–11, 2012

TOSA Donor Family Services
210-614-7030

Aptalis CF Cycle for Life Wheels in Motion to Cure Cystic Fibrosis

Saturday, November 17, 2012

Rider Check-In: 7:00 AM

Start: 8:00 AM

Palo Alto College

San Antonio, TX 78224

<http://lonestar.cff.org/cycleforlife>

Circle for Life Ride to Restore Life

Saturday, April 27, 2013

Ride Begins: 9:00 AM

Javelina Harley-Davidson
Boerne, TX

www.thecircleforlife.com



■ In honor of National Donate Life Month in April, **Jan Owen** of TOSA organized retired military organ recipients and met with medical staff at the San Antonio Military Medical Center to promote organ donor awareness in the military community.

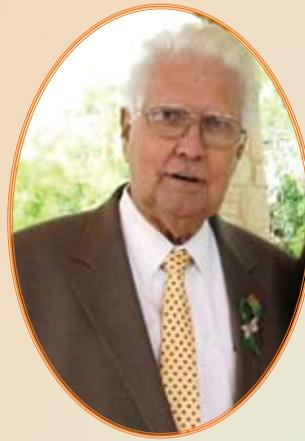
Holding the flag: Dr. Jeremy Cannon, Lt Col, USAF, MC and Dr. Timothy Nunez, LTC, MC, USA **Second Row:** Darnell Waun (Liver), Debra Aparcio (Lungs) **Third Row:** Lloyd Parker (Kidney), Fleming Mitchell (Heart) and Jim Balthazar (Heart) (deceased 5/15/2012)



■ **Ken Kleesel** (recipient) and **sister Patsy Kimes** (donor) celebrated the 29th anniversary of their kidney transplant that occurred at University (Bexar County) Hospital on May 11, 1983. Both have enjoyed healthy, productive lives on single kidneys.



■ Inspired by the story of her Grandmother's liver transplant in 1990 performed just 2 days after her birth, **Alice Driskill's** granddaughter Daniella felt the desire to pursue a career in the medical field. On the day of Alice's 22nd year transplant anniversary, Daniella graduated with a 3.6 GPA at Texas Tech University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Thanks to the work of Dr. Speeg, Dr. Halff, and the rest of the transplant team, Alice, along with her husband Walter, were able to witness and celebrate this very special event.



Jim Balthazar

September 8, 1938
– May 15, 2012

On May 15, 2012, the transplant community, San Antonio, and the State of Texas lost a wonderful friend and advocate who treated everyone like “family” regardless of their affiliation with the field of organ and tissue donation & transplantation. If you look up the term “volunteer” in the dictionary you would find Jim’s picture! Jim was a “presence” in the transplant community who made sure the needs of transplant recipients and donor families alike were met.

Jim was the Past-President of Vital Alliance, an organization of volunteers representing organ recipients, donor families, and representatives from organ, eye, and tissue organizations as well as the medical community. He was an active committee member on the annual Vital Alliance Tree Planting and Run/Walks. He never missed a Genesis Support Group meeting at University Transplant Center and mentored many recipients and their families throughout their transplant journey. He helped organize and create the Lone Star Transplant Games and served as Secretary on the Board of Directors of the National Kidney Foundation San Antonio Chapter. In 2008 he was awarded TOSA’s Manuel Soliz Award for his dedication and service as a volunteer.

Jim had his heart transplant in 1995. His heart donor’s family, if they could know, would be amazed by the tens of thousands of lives their loved one touched and motivated to register as donors through Jim’s tireless efforts. In the transplant community, Jim’s legacy is “Making a difference through the power of volunteerism”. We can honor that legacy by becoming a volunteer in our own communities!



■ **James Ward** (lung, 2011) gives back by educating thousands of coaches on Organ, Tissue, and Eye Donation and registered donors at this year’s Coaches Conference held at the Henry B. Gonzalez Conference Center in San Antonio.

TRANSPLANT Hail & Farewell

David Rodriguez has joined the UTC staff as your Patient Navigator. In this position, he serves as a link between the patient and family and the transplant community, volunteer staff health system providers, social workers and referring physicians. He focuses on the unique needs of transplant recipients and their families as they move through their transplant journey. He graciously accepts compliments on the wonderful things happening during your visits at UTC and addresses concerns or barriers in our pursuit of “world-class” customer service for our patients and their families.

You will see David throughout the transplant center and he would love to hear from you at david.rodriguez3@uhs-sa.com or by calling **210-358-4643**.

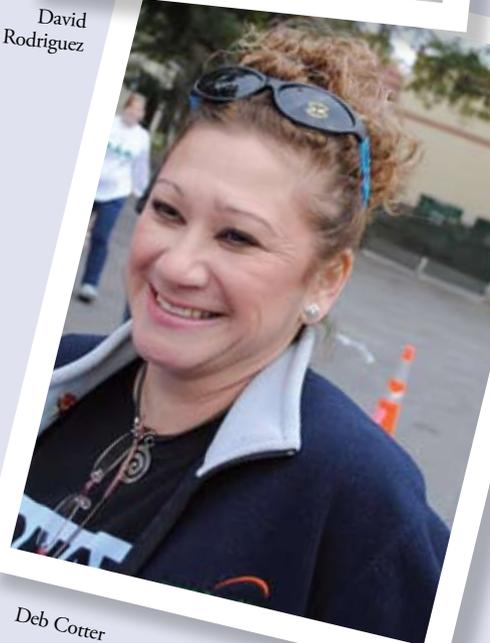
After spending 7 years on the Organ Procurement Team, **Deb Cotter** departed University Transplant Center in April and started a new chapter of her life that involved moving to a different city and taking a position as a Marketing Coordinator at a Long Term Nursing & Rehabilitation Center.

Deb said of her time at UTC: “It has been an honor and a heartfelt pleasure to work with all transplant recipients who have shared their personal life-changing experiences through transplant with me. A very fulfilling part of my work here was facilitating communication between recipients and their donor families. To those who have started communication with their donor family, waiting for a reply is the hardest part but well worth the wait!!! Congratulations to those who have met their “hero’s” family. Keep up your efforts in promoting organ, tissue, and eye donor awareness wherever you are. Your efforts must continue for those still waiting for life- saving organs to have that “second chance” at life like yourself. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for sharing your transplant journey with me!!!”

If you would like to keep in touch with Deb she would love to hear how your “second chance” in life is progressing! You can reach her on Facebook by searching: “Deborah Ramirez-Cotter.”



David Rodriguez



Deb Cotter

UTC STATS (1/1/2012 – 6/30/2012)

Transplants: Kidney Liver Lung Pancreas
19 21 15 0

Outcomes Data (1/1/2009 – 6/30/2011):

Source: Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients @ www.srtr.org

		Kidney	Liver	Lung
1-Year Graft Survival	Expected:	94.16	84.08	83.52
	Observed:	96.95	80.33	85.93
	National:	93.81	86.50	83.82
1-Year Patient Survival	Expected:	96.61	87.01	84.79
	Observed:	98.31	84.70	86.56
	National:	96.87	89.53	85.13

We are proud to share with our patients and partners that our transplant outcomes exceed, or are not significantly different from, the national and expected statistics. If you have questions about these statistics you can view them at the website above or contact us at 210-567-5777.

4502 Medical Drive MS 18
San Antonio, TX 78229



Casi Graves, Living Kidney Transplant Donor, 2012 and family

Brittney Phillips Smith, Living Kidney Transplant Recipient, 2012

Transplant Action Item

JOIN THE CONVERSATION! Today, more people are using social media to stay connected and informed on things happening around them than ever before. Now that we have also joined in on Facebook and Twitter, we want to take advantage of this to stay connected with you! Our goal is to create a place where patients, families, and staff can share their experiences and where we can share updates on what is going on inside our transplant center. Join in on the conversation as we continue to grow our transplant family!

 [Facebook.com/UniversityTransplantCenter](https://www.facebook.com/UniversityTransplantCenter)

 [Twitter.com/UnivTransplant](https://twitter.com/UnivTransplant)

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OUR
latest
parking
map
before your
next visit!

