



## Transplant Candidate Education Program — Confirmation of Education

The Transplant Candidate Education Program was developed to fully inform you about the evaluation process to receive a kidney transplant from a living donor or to be placed on the waiting list for a deceased donor organ. The selection criteria (the things that would qualify or disqualify you for a transplant) were discussed with you. The risks and benefits of organ transplantation and information about the surgical procedure were also reviewed. In addition, alternative treatments, your rights as a transplant recipient, and insurance and confidentiality issues were discussed. The following information will outline what you have learned in the Transplant Candidate Education Program.

■ ■ SAINT BARNABAS  
■ ■ HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

*Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division*



# Overview

## A. Participation

Your participation in this evaluation process is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the evaluation process at any time. In addition, if and when you are found eligible for a transplant, you have the right to refuse transplantation at any time, including when you are called in to receive a transplant.

## B. Treatment Alternatives

Persons with kidney failure have several options:

1. Dialysis: Hemodialysis or Peritoneal Dialysis
2. Kidney Transplantation - Kidney may come from:
  - a. Deceased donor kidney
  - b. Living donor
    - (i) **Compatible Donor**
      - (A) Related: blood or genetically related
      - (B) Unrelated: emotional connection (e.g., spouse, in-law, friend)
    - (ii) **Incompatible Donor**
      - (A) *Living Donor Kidney Exchange Program*: for recipients with medically acceptable living donors who are incompatible by blood type or crossmatch, recipient/donor pairs are entered into a registry for an exchange match.
      - (B) *Program for Incompatible Transplants*: for recipients with willing living donors who have incompatible blood type or crossmatch compatibility issues. Recipients receive medical therapies before and after transplant to significantly increase the likelihood for a successful transplant outcome.

## C. Recipient Benefits

According to the most recent United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) Scientific Registry for Transplant Recipients data:

1. On average, patients who receive a kidney transplant have significantly increased life expectancy compared to patients who are maintained on dialysis while waiting for a kidney.
2. On average, diabetic transplant recipients live

longer than diabetic patients who are maintained on dialysis.

3. Most transplant recipients report an enhanced quality of life through improved health and energy.
4. These benefits may vary depending on the age and other medical conditions of the transplant recipient.

# Additional Information

The following organizations and associated web sites provide general information, frequently asked questions and patient testimonials about kidney transplantation:

[www.optn.org](http://www.optn.org) – The Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN): The unified transplant network established by the United States Congress under the National Organ Transplant Act (NOTA) of 1984

[www.unos.org](http://www.unos.org) –United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS): The organization contracted to administer the OPTN. UNOS has also developed a website specifically for patients and families at [www.transplantliving.org](http://www.transplantliving.org)

[www.sharenj.org](http://www.sharenj.org) – The Sharing Network: The non-profit, federally certified organ procurement organization (OPO) An OPO is a program that acquires and coordinates placement of donated organs for patients on national transplant waiting lists.

[www.kidneyfund.org](http://www.kidneyfund.org) – American Kidney Fund (AKF)

[www.a-s-t.org](http://www.a-s-t.org) – American Society of Transplantation

[www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org) – National Kidney Foundation

[www.saintbarnabas.com/services/renal/index.html](http://www.saintbarnabas.com/services/renal/index.html)

– Saint Barnabas Health Care System Renal and Pancreas Transplant

# The Evaluation Process

## A. Eligibility/Ineligibility

The evaluation process determines if you are medically eligible to receive a kidney transplant and includes an assessment to make sure that there are no psychological or social barriers to transplantation. The goal of the evaluation process is to make sure your health status is optimal and that you would be able to be safely

transplanted. If a new health problem is found during the evaluation, you may be referred back to your nephrologist or the appropriate medical specialist. If a serious health problem is found it is possible that you may be ineligible to receive a transplant.

Your Transplant Coordinator will work closely with you to ensure that your evaluation is completed in a timely fashion. This should take no longer than 90 days in most circumstances and many times the evaluation can be completed in much less time. If you do not complete your testing within this timeframe, your Transplant Coordinator will make every attempt to determine why there is a delay in completing your evaluation and work to help you move forward to completion. If you do not complete your evaluation, despite multiple attempts to contact you or assist you to do this, your case may be closed for lack of responsiveness.

If you are being evaluated for a pancreas transplant, either simultaneous kidney-pancreas (SPK) or pancreas after kidney (PAK), you must first complete the evaluation process for kidney transplant. You will then be scheduled to see the pancreas team for evaluation and education about pancreas transplantation at a separate time.

## B. Group Education Session

The Group Education Session includes a discussion of the following topics:

1. Selection criteria (disqualifying conditions) and testing requirements needed for medical clearance
2. Tissue-typing and crossmatching
3. How the wait list works including multiple wait listing and transfer of wait time
4. Living and deceased donor organs: types and issues specific to each type
5. Expanded Criteria Donor Kidneys and Donation after Cardiac Death
6. What happens when an organ becomes available
7. Overview of the transplant surgery
8. The general hospital experience
9. Common immunosuppressant medications and their side effects

10. Post Transplant Care - visits to the transplant clinic

11. Possible transplant complications:  
i.e. rejection, infection

12. Financial considerations

13. Healthy lifestyle following transplantation

## C. Individual Evaluations

The following individual evaluations are also part of the evaluation process:

1. Nursing Assessment
  - a. Review of required laboratory and diagnostic testing required
  - b. Education/discussion about the option of living donation
2. Physician Evaluation
  - a. History and Physical
  - b. Education/discussion including:
    - (i) risks and benefits of transplantation
    - (ii) option of living kidney donation
3. Social Work Assessment
  - a. A thorough discussion of your psychological and social history
  - b. A review of compliance with your current medical regimen (i.e., medication; dialysis)
  - c. A discussion of your reasons for wanting to become a transplant recipient
  - d. A discussion of the possible psycho-social risks including possible emotional, financial, and physical stressors that receiving a transplant may pose to you and your family
  - e. Education/discussion about the option of living donation
  - f. Review of your current insurance status and future insurability issues
4. Nutrition Assessment
  - a. Nutrition assessment and education aimed at achieving and maintaining optimal nutritional status for transplantation

## D. Overview of Requirements for Medical Clearance

1. Basic Testing (within the last 12 months)
  - a. Medical History and Physical – from referring nephrologist
  - b. Chest X Ray
  - c. Electrocardiogram (EKG)
  - d. Complete blood work results from your dialysis unit or MD office
  - e. Serologies: Hepatitis B and C, and HIV
  - f. Social Work Assessment from dialysis unit – if you are on dialysis
  - g. Medical Evidence Report (MER) from your dialysis unit - if you are on dialysis
2. Cancer Screening
  - a. Colonoscopy for patients over 50 years old
  - b. Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) for men over 45 years old
  - c. PAP smear for all women
  - d. Mammogram for women with family history of breast cancer and/or over 40 years old
3. Cardiac Testing: Nuclear Stress Test, Echocardiogram and coronary angiogram may be required for patients with any of the following:
  - a. Abnormal Electrocardiogram (EKG)
  - b. History of hypertension
  - c. History of diabetes
  - d. History of cardiac problems such as heart attack, angioplasty, stent placement, bypass surgery, valve replacement
4. Other Testing that may be required based on your medical history:
  - a. Blood clotting tests
  - b. Lung function tests
  - c. Ultrasound of liver/kidney
  - d. Peripheral vascular studies
  - e. Others as recommended by transplant physician or required by your insurance company

## E. Recipient Selection Criteria

Absolute contraindications or disqualifying conditions for kidney transplant include:

- Severe Coronary Heart Disease
- Severe Heart Failure
- Severe Peripheral Vascular (Blood Vessel) Disease
- Severe psychiatric illness, uncontrolled with medication
- Chronic infections (unresolved)
- Advanced Pulmonary (Lung) Disease
- Advanced Liver Disease
- Advanced Cancer
- Chronic proven non-compliance with medication and/or prescribed treatment(s)
- Active Substance Abuse
- Morbid obesity with Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than or equal to 40
- Age 85 or older
- Absence of funding for transplant procedure, hospital charges and/or medications
- Multiple medical conditions which, in combination, would make transplantation too high risk for you

## F. Yearly Updating of Tests

Your transplant coordinator will inform you which tests need to be updated yearly and will help you with this requirement. It is your responsibility to make sure your testing is up to date.

## G. Tissue Typing Overview:

1. Blood Group Compatibility:

	Recipient	Donor must be
Blood type	A	A or O
Blood type	B	B or O
Blood type	O	O
Blood type	AB	A or B or AB or O

## 2. Tissue Typing and Crossmatching

- a. Tissue typing is done to determine your genetic markers (or your HLA – Human Leukocyte Antigens).
- b. Panel Reactive Antibody (PRA) measures whether you have formed antibodies to other people's HLA as a result of previous blood transfusions, pregnancies, or transplantations.
- c. Crossmatching is the most important test to determine compatibility. Blood is mixed from the potential recipient and the potential donor.
  - (i) A "positive" crossmatch means there was a reaction upon the mixing of the bloods. The donor therefore may not be able to donate to the recipient.
  - (ii) A "negative" crossmatch means there was no reaction and the recipient and donor are compatible.

## H. Monthly Blood Specimen

Once you are active on the transplant waiting list, one red top tube of blood must be sent to The Sharing Network on a monthly basis. If you are on dialysis, your unit can send this in for you. If you are not on dialysis, you must have this tube drawn and sent directly to The Sharing Network. Your transplant coordinator will teach you exactly how to fulfill this very important responsibility. If a current blood tube is not at The Sharing Network at the time a deceased donor kidney is identified for you, you may lose the opportunity to receive that kidney.

## I. Activation on the Waiting List

To become active, you must complete all of the evaluations and diagnostic tests required and be considered medically and psychosocially eligible. You will be sent an official letter from your transplant coordinator informing you that you are now active on the transplant waiting list. In addition, your nephrologist and your dialysis unit (if applicable) will be notified.

## J. The Waiting List

When a deceased donor organ becomes available, you must be blood group compatible. A list of potential blood group compatible recipients is generated based on a point system. The points are allocated based upon time waiting, quality of match, high recipient PRA (Panel Reactive-Antibody) and pediatric recipient status. If you are on this list, you will receive a phone call from a transplant coordinator. To be considered for this kidney you must be medically stable with no active infections and have your monthly blood specimen at The Sharing Network. You will receive detailed information and instructions from the transplant coordinator. Every available deceased donor kidney generates a different list of potential recipients. Therefore, there is no way to tell your "position on the list" until a particular kidney becomes available.

As soon as a center accepts you as a transplant candidate, your "waiting time" begins. Under Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) policy, you can list at more than one transplant center (multiple-list). As with any transplant listing, you must be evaluated and accepted by a transplant center. You should also check with your insurance provider to see if there are costs associated with multiple listing that may not be covered. In addition, you would need to maintain current lab results and contact information for each transplant program where you list.

The longest amount of time you have waited at any center is called your "primary waiting time". If you list at multiple centers, your waiting time at each center will start from the date that center listed you. OPTN policy allows you to transfer your primary waiting time to another center where you are listed, or switch time waited at different programs. You are not allowed to add-up or split your total waiting time among multiple centers. Any request to transfer or switch waiting time must be approved by the transplant center(s) involved, and may require a written request from the patient.

Each patient will be provided with a pamphlet entitled "Questions and Answers for Transplant Candidates

and Families about Multiple Listing and Waiting Time Transfer” for detailed information pursuant to OPTN and UNOS policy.

### K. Living Donors

If you have a living donor, he/she may contact your transplant coordinator. Once it is determined that you are a candidate for transplantation, any willing living kidney donors that you identify will proceed with their education and evaluation. Living donors may be related to you by blood or may have an emotional connection with you (i.e. spouse or a friend). Another type of living donor is called an altruistic donor. This type of donor has offered their kidney to someone they do not have an emotional relationship with and in some cases to someone they do not even know. Altruistic donors may specify who they want to give their kidney to or may decide to donate it to the next qualified waiting list recipient.

It is our policy to discourage recipients from the use of the internet or ads to solicit donors due to the potential for unethical interactions or possibly illegal arrangements. It is often impossible for the transplant team to discern the nature of these interactions or arrangements. For this reason, we will not evaluate potential living donors who were solicited through the internet or ads. Likewise, we will not evaluate donors outside of the U.S. who are not related to you.

### L. Deceased Donors

1. Deceased donor organs are obtained from individuals after their death whose next of kin has given permission to have their organs donated.
2. Deceased donor organs are most often from persons with brain death. Brain death means that there is no brain function, but the heart is still beating so that the blood supply is still flowing to all of the body's organs. Deceased donor organs may also come from non-heart-beating donors. This means the organs were donated after cardiac death has occurred. This is referred to as donation after cardiac death (DCD). Cardiac death means the patient is without oxygen and the heart has stopped beating.

3. At the time an organ becomes available, the transplant coordinator will provide you with general information about the deceased donor organ such as age of the donor, sex, cause of death, as well as any known risk factors (discussed below). Before deciding to accept the donor organ, you may wish to speak to the transplant physician on-call, if there are any additional concerns or questions. The risks and benefits of accepting the donor organ will be reviewed with you at the time of admission by the transplant physician.
4. Remember, you have the right to refuse a deceased donor organ offer at any time.

### M. Organ Risk Factors

1. Organ risk factors that could affect the success of the transplant or the health of the transplant recipient include, but are not limited to, the donor's history, the condition or age of the organ used, and/or the recipient's risk of contracting an infectious disease.
2. The Organ Procurement Organization is responsible for the medical/social evaluation of each potential donor to reduce the risk of transmission of any donor illness. If a donor's social history indicates that the donor could potentially be in a “window period” for transmission of HIV, Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B or other infectious disease, you will be notified of the risk of contracting these diseases. A window period for transmission means that the donor may test negative for the disease but a review of social and/or behavioral history of the donor may indicate that he/she may have recently become infected and therefore may be infectious to others. In this situation, the transplant physician will discuss this potential risk with you.
3. A candidate who is positive for Hepatitis C virus in the blood may be offered kidneys from deceased donors who are also Hepatitis C antibody positive. The benefit of this is that waiting time is decreased significantly for patients accepting Hepatitis C

positive donor kidneys. The risks of being transplanted with a Hepatitis C positive kidney include:

- a. Worsening of liver function
  - b. Infection
  - c. Decreased survival of the transplanted kidney
4. An Expanded Criteria Donor (“ECD”) kidney is obtained from a deceased donor who is
- a. over the age of 60 or
  - b. between 50-60 years of age who has 2 of the following criteria:
    - (i) Donor died of a brain injury or stroke
    - (ii) Donor had a history of high blood pressure prior to death
    - (iii) Donor had a serum creatinine of 1.5 or greater at the time of donation

A recipient, under specific circumstances, may be offered two kidneys from the same ECD donor instead of one, if the biopsy shows that one kidney may be less than adequate long term. Transplantation of two kidneys in a patient at the same time is considered to give the recipient the advantage of receiving additional filtering units therefore better kidney function. The operation is challenging and different and therefore will be offered only to patients who may benefit and can be safely transplanted with this procedure.

5. Kidneys Donated after Cardiac Death (“DCD”) have increased risk for several things including (but not limited to) the following:
- a. Slow or delayed initial functioning (Delayed Graft Function)
  - b. Risk of rejection
  - c. Increased risk of rejection
  - d. Rare instances of blood clot formation in the transplanted kidney (Graft Thrombosis) resulting in immediate failure of the kidney

Patients are encouraged to consider organ offers from ECD/DCD donors because the average wait time for a kidney transplant currently exceeds five years in New

Jersey. Many patients in the U.S. die while awaiting an organ transplant. Tremendous progress has been made in the area of transplanting ECD/DCD organs and results have shown very good success rates. The alternative for patients is to remain on dialysis where overall health may deteriorate and quality of life may be diminished. Remember, your transplant team has carefully considered the organ offer made to you and has determined that this is an acceptable offer despite the risks outlined.

## N. Financial Considerations

Transplantation is an expensive undertaking that requires a serious commitment. It represents a partnership between you, your physicians, and the transplant team. Therefore, it is important for you to understand the terms and conditions of your current insurance and to keep the transplant team apprised of any changes that may occur with your coverage. The Financial Coordinator and Transplant Social Worker will explain the financial considerations involved in transplantation and verify your health insurance coverage both initially and periodically. However, it remains your responsibility to be aware of any changes to your insurance coverage and to contact the Financial Coordinator immediately. Failure to do so may jeopardize your ability to receive a transplant.

Most patients with Chronic Kidney Disease are eligible to receive Medicare benefits through the federal ESRD Medicare Program. Medicare may cover most of the costs related to transplantation, if you are eligible; however, there are many expenses that will need to be coordinated with other insurance coverage such as private insurance, a Medi-Gap plan or Medicaid. This has been reviewed with you and your family and you have been given additional information appropriate to your circumstances if necessary.

In some situations, Medi-Gap premiums are subsidized through grants obtained by the dialysis unit. This assistance will terminate after transplantation so it is important to plan appropriately. Patients also need to understand that

Medicare or other disability entitlements such as Medicaid, may be affected by transplantation. For example, Medicare benefits terminate three years after a successful transplant if there are no other qualifying disabilities.

### **O. Transplant Services Received at a Non-Medicare Certified Facility**

The Renal and Pancreas Transplant Centers of Saint Barnabas Health Care System are Medicare approved facilities. However, you should know that if the transplant recipient were to receive his/her transplant at a non-Medicare approved transplant center it could affect the recipient's ability to have immunosuppressive drugs paid for under their Medicare Part B.

### **P. Hospital Admission**

If you are receiving a kidney from a living donor, your surgery will be scheduled. One week prior to surgery, the donor, recipient, and family members will attend a Family Meeting. At this meeting the surgical procedure for both the donor and recipient will be reviewed. The risks and benefits of receiving this living donor organ will have been reviewed with you by this time. Your medical suitability to undergo the transplant operation will be re-evaluated. A significant change in the candidate's health status may, in certain circumstances, lead to postponement or possibly cancellation of the transplant surgery.

If you receive an organ from a deceased donor you will be admitted to the hospital as directed by the transplant coordinator. You will need to bring your insurance cards and your medication list with you as well as your Advanced Directive, if you have one. When you arrive, you will have necessary laboratory and medical testing done. You will be admitted by the transplant physician who will review the known risks and benefits of that donor organ with you. You will meet the surgeon and anesthesiologist at this time also. If there is a research protocol for which you are being considered, this will also be discussed with you at this time. If you choose to participate, the transplant physician will take informed consent for the research protocol at this time.

### **Q. Patient Rights and Grievance Process**

The *New Jersey State - Ambulatory Care Patient Bill of Rights* outlines your rights as a patient at our health care facility. All patients are asked to sign an acknowledgment form stating their receipt of these rights.

In addition to the grievance procedures listed on the New Jersey State –Ambulatory Care Patient Bill of Rights, patients with chronic kidney disease have several other alternatives. If a grievance or complaint cannot be resolved to the patient's satisfaction through the Transplant Department Administrator and/or the Medical Center's Patient Satisfaction Department, the patient or family may contact the Quality Insights Renal Network per their ESRD Consumer Complaint/Grievance Procedure at 1.888.877.8400.

In addition, UNOS provides a toll-free patient services line to help transplant candidates, recipients, and family members understand organ allocation practices and transplantation data. You may call UNOS to discuss a problem you may be experiencing with your transplant center or the transplantation system in general at 1-888-894-6361.

## **The Transplant Surgical Procedure**

### **A. Prior to Transplant**

In preparation for surgery, you may expect to have blood drawn to determine whether or not dialysis treatment is necessary before your surgery. In addition, an electrocardiogram (EKG) will be done to ensure your cardiac status is stable. An intravenous line will be inserted into a large vein (near your collarbone). It will provide a way to administer medications, fluids, and possible blood products prior to, during, and after surgery. An additional IV line may be started in your arm. Antibiotics and anti-rejection medications will be administered either orally or through the IV.

## B. The Transplant Operation

You will meet the transplant surgeon who will discuss the technical aspects of the operation with you and will ask you to sign an informed consent. When you are taken to the operating room you will be given general anesthesia. The average length of surgery is 3 to 4 hours. A tube (catheter) will be inserted in your bladder to help pass urine and monitor urine output.

After the transplant operation is completed, you will be brought to the recovery room where you will stay until the transplant physician decides that you can be transferred to the next level of care, either the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Transplant Step-Down Unit or direct transfer to the Transplant Floor.

## C. The Hospital Stay

Because your immune system will be suppressed by medications, you should have as few visitors as possible. To further prevent infection, flowers are not allowed. You will remain in the hospital until discharged by your physician (the average length of hospital stay is 3 to 5 days). The Inpatient Transplant Coordinator will teach you how to care for yourself following transplantation including how to organize and take your medications. You will receive an educational manual titled Planning for Home that has been prepared especially for you and your family. It will help you understand the best way to take care of yourself and your new transplant.

## D. After Transplant

After you are discharged home, you will receive follow up care in the Transplant Clinic. Initially, you will be seen several times per week. Gradually, the length of time between visits will decrease depending on your particular situation. Several months after successful transplantation, you may return to your own kidney doctor (nephrologist) for monthly check ups with only periodic monitoring at the Transplant Clinic. Some nephrologists prefer that their patients return to them even sooner and this decision will be made by you, your transplant doctor and your nephrologist.

## E. Medical/Surgical Risks and Complications

There is no guarantee that the transplanted organ will work immediately or even work at all. Following is a list of uncommon, but known complications of kidney transplant.

1. Potential surgical complications can include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Clotting of transplanted kidney. This means that the transplanted kidney fails to work at all in the recipient due to a blood clot in the kidney. This occurs in 1 to 2 % of the cases.

The recipient may require a second surgery in an attempt to correct the problem or remove the kidney if the problem is not correctable.

  - b. Urine leakage requiring repair
  - c. Rupture of transplanted kidney
  - d. Collection of fluid around transplanted organ with or without a blockage
  - e. Bleeding requiring a transfusion and/or a re-operation to drain collected blood and stop bleeding
  - f. Wound infection
  - g. Wound separation requiring repair or wound care
  - h. Death
  - i. Unexpected complications related to the actual operation
  - j. Femoral (a large nerve supplying the leg on the side of the transplant procedure) nerve injury resulting in permanent leg weakness.
2. Potential medical complications can include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Acute rejection: The recipient's immune system recognizing the donor's kidney is called rejection. The majority of rejection episodes are successfully treated with medication and kidney function returns to normal.
  - b. Kidney biopsy: A kidney biopsy is the best way to diagnose rejection. The risks associated with this procedure are bleeding and infection.

- c. Infection, other than wound infection
  - d. Delayed or slow transplant kidney function that may require dialysis
  - e. Medication related complications such as unexpected side-effects
  - f. Risk of heart attack, arrhythmia or stroke
3. Potential long term transplant complications can include, but are not limited to:
- a. Chronic rejection
  - b. Complications related to long-term immunosuppression such as osteoporosis and increased risk of cancer and infection
  - c. Development of new-onset diabetes

## Program Plan of Coverage

The Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division is covered by a Transplant Physician Service which consists of Board Certified Nephrologists and Board Certified Surgeons who specialize in transplantation and participate actively in the clinical activities of the Division. The Transplant Physician Service is selected and overseen by the Chief of the Transplant Division, based on qualifications, experience, and the needs of the Transplant Division. The Transplant Physician Service covers all areas of transplant patient care including pre-transplant, inpatient services, post-transplant clinic, transplant research and emergency department care/admissions.

The Transplant Physician Service also provides on-call coverage after hours for the Division. Coverage consists of a transplant surgeon and a transplant physician available 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All post transplant patients will have access to routine care during normal business hours and will have access to urgent care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Additionally, the Chief of Transplant is generally available by beeper, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and provides back up coverage and consultation to both the Transplant Physician Service and to Transplant Coordinators who are on-call for organ allocation issues.

All patients who are associated with the Transplant Program (evaluation patients, active UNOS wait list patients and post transplant patients) will be notified in writing, by the Chief of the Transplant Division or his designee, of any circumstance which would impact their ability to receive a transplant or subsequent care at this center. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, loss of Medicare certification, notification by UNOS of an adverse action imposed upon the center, unavailability of a transplant surgeon, or a disaster situation requiring transfer of patients due to the center's temporary or permanent closing. In the event of a disaster, written notification may be delayed due to the effects of the disaster. In this event, patients are instructed to contact the UNOS Patient Services line for immediate assistance at 1-888-894-6361.

## Confidentiality

All communication between patients and Saint Barnabas Health Care System are confidential. Saint Barnabas Health Care System personnel who are involved in the course of your care may review your medical record. They are required to maintain confidentiality as per law and the policy of the Saint Barnabas Health Care System. If you do become a transplant candidate/recipient, appropriate medical information which will include your identity, will be sent to The Sharing Network and UNOS and may be sent to other places involved in the transplant process as permitted by law.

## Accessing Updated Information

Technology in the field of transplantation is always improving as science evolves, new medications are developed and advanced techniques are implemented. As such, it is important that you keep abreast of the most up to date information as it relates to your pending transplant. Please be sure to visit our website at [www.saintbarnabas.com/services/renal/index.html](http://www.saintbarnabas.com/services/renal/index.html)

to access information. The Transplant Candidate Education Program, as well as the National and Center specific outcomes, will be updated regularly. You may also contact your Transplant Coordinator at any time to request that a copy be mailed to you.

## Recipient Outcome Information

In general, outcomes for transplant recipients are excellent. The Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR) publishes updated reports every six (6) months on activities at each transplant center and organ procurement organization in the United States. This can be accessed by visiting their website at [www.ustransplant.org](http://www.ustransplant.org).

You will be given a document which represents the most current national and center-specific data obtained from the UNOS Scientific Registry for Transplant Recipients at the time of your initial evaluation.

