

Renal and Pancreas Transplant news

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Revolutionizes Living Donor Transplant

Stuart R. Geffner, MD, Director of Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Surgery

A decade ago laparoscopic technology revolutionized the field of surgery, creating a new generation of minimally invasive procedures. Today, surgeons at Barnabas Health have taken that technology one step further. They are using robotics to perform both living donor nephrectomies (kidney removal) and implantation of the kidney into the recipient.

In fact, Stuart R. Geffner, MD, Director of Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Surgery, Barnabas Health Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division, is the first in the world to use the Intuitive Surgical's da Vinci™ Surgical System to successfully implant a kidney into a living recipient. This procedure revolutionizes kidney transplant surgery, taking an open procedure to an advanced form of laparoscopic surgery.

"The robotic transplant requires a 5 cm incision which is just large enough to introduce the kidney into the recipient's body. It is approximately one-third the size of a conventional 'open' transplant incision. I believe that this will be beneficial to the patient in terms of quicker recovery, as well as a lower incidence of the most frequent post-operative complications - wound infection and bleeding," states Dr. Geffner.

For Jim and Maureen Schrader, it was transformational.

When Jim and Maureen met in 2004, they knew they were a perfect love match but they never realized just how perfect. A Type 1 diabetic since the age of 28,



Maureen began to get sick around Christmas 2007. Over the ensuing months, her health deteriorated. One afternoon in early spring, her husband happened to stop home and found her passed out close to death on the floor. Soon after, doctors told her that her kidneys had failed and that she would need to have dialysis until a donor was found. They were referred to the Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division.

They met the transplant team and discussed their options which included the transplant list as well as the Living Donor Institute. Jim immediately volunteered to be tested and turned out to be a perfect match. "The match was so perfect, people asked us if we were related," says Maureen. "God had us meet for a reason, and now we know why."

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Saint Barnabas Medical Center Performs Single Center Eight-Pair Kidney Transplant Chain: Transforming the Lives of 16 People



Recipients seated, from left, are: Francis Margherita, Michael Iannaccio, Christopher Miele, Carmen Castro, Philip Mastroianni, Brian Glackin, John Wincz and Walter Cockroft. Standing are: Matthew I. Whang, MD and Stuart Geffner, MD; donors: Kim Iannaccio, Debbie Miele, Juan Castro, Barbara Mastroianni, Diane Schmidt, and Mary Beth Moynihan; John F. Bonamo, MD, MS, Shamkant Mulgaonkar, MD. (Not pictured are the altruistic donor and Kathleen Margherita.)

The largest Paired Kidney Exchange at one facility in the region and one of the biggest in the United States recently took place at Saint Barnabas Medical Center (SBMC). This chain of eight transplants, which transformed the lives of 16 people, happened between Valentines Day and February 16, 2011. Eight people donated kidneys to eight recipients. On April 21, 2011, the donors and recipients met for the first time and learned whose lives were forever intertwined.

The SBMC Renal and Pancreas Transplant Program's Living Donor Paired Exchange Program allows patients who have a willing but incompatible donor the option of joining an exchange registry to be matched with donor/recipient pairs in the same situation. While none of the couples matched each other in this eight-pair exchange, each was willing to donate to another person so that their loved one could receive a kidney.

The chain began with one remarkable altruistic donor -- a man who volunteered for an operation that offered no benefit to himself. It was a donation made solely to help others. From that first altruistic gift, through coordination, advanced technology and sophisticated computer

modeling, the SBMC team built a chain that included six married couples, one set of friends, and one recipient from the transplant waiting list. "When we came up with eight pairs, we knew we had a miracle on our hands," explained Shamkant Mulgaonkar, MD, Chief of the Renal and Pancreas Division for Barnabas Health.

Barbara Mastroianni and Phillip Mastroianni were part of the chain. They have been married for 39 years and have two children. Diabetes had slowly destroyed Mr. Mastroianni's kidneys. Last July, dialysis became a reality. Although Mrs. Mastroianni did not match her husband, she was desperate to try and help him. "I was watching my husband dying at home in a chair," she shared. The exchange program allowed her to donate her kidney so that her husband could receive a kidney. "By participating in the exchange, I not only helped my husband but was able to help another family which is so special," she added.

A staff of more than 200 professionals from SBMC worked for months to meticulously orchestrate this transplant chain. The majority of participants were from New Jersey; one couple was from Staten Island. All of the transplants were performed as scheduled and all of the participants are feeling well. "This chain is a testament to the transformative power of kidney donation on the life of an individual and to that of their family," remarked Dr. Mulgaonkar.

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Maureen and Jim are both doing well and are grateful to have each other. Now as Jim reminds Maureen, "Wherever you go, you will have a piece of me inside you. We are forever linked together."

Benefit to Donors and Recipients

For the patient, robot-assisted surgery is safe, minimally invasive and offers faster recovery time. Patients usually leave the hospital within a day or two and resume normal activity shortly thereafter. Dr. Geffner hopes that this new technology and the ease with which kidneys can be removed will encourage more people to become living donors. Currently, more than 90,000 people in the United States are waiting for a kidney transplant. Many have to wait five to seven years before they find a match. A shortage of living donors is one reason for the long wait.

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR RENAL TRANSPLANT E-NEWSLETTER
Barnabas Health Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division offers a free e-newsletter that provides timely tips and valuable updates regarding health care as well as new programs and services available at our Renal Transplant Center and throughout the hospital. To sign up, please visit www.transplantkidney.org.

Barnabas Health Wants More Patients to “Explore Transplant”

Kidney transplantation can mean a new lease on life for patients on dialysis, removing them from the procedure’s demanding schedule and giving them a new, functioning organ.

But medical professionals with the Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division of Barnabas Health are concerned that some local patients aren’t aware of the full possibilities of transplantation. To reach out to them, they are first reaching out to the nurses and professionals who see those patients regularly, the ones at dialysis centers across the tri-state area.

Recently, Barnabas Health was the first facility in New Jersey to hold Explore Transplant, an educational seminar designed to teach dialysis professionals how to talk to patients about transplantation and living donation.

The workshop was conducted by Explore Transplant creator Amy Waterman, PhD, an assistant professor of medicine at Washington University School of Medicine, and Christina Goalby, MSW, Explore Transplant co-trainer and experienced dialysis center social worker. An expert panel discussion was conducted by several members of the Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division.

Dr. Waterman first started Explore Transplant at St. Louis’ Barnes-Jewish Hospital, funded with a grant by the Health Resources and Services Administration. By talking providers through a series of

three to four patient meetings, Explore Transplant aims to help them assess the individual patient’s stage of readiness and comfort in pursuing transplantation.

“We educated 110 providers from more than 60 dialysis centers and other organizations who can now utilize the program with their patients,” explained Debbie Morgan, MSW, LCSW, Director of the Transplant Division. “We hope that this will have a positive impact on the lives of those receiving the education and may extend their lifetimes,” she added.

At the end of the session, providers were prepared to educate patients about the transplant waiting list, the transplant procedure and the options available through the Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division for living donation from a loved one. They were also given a DVD with testimonials from patients on the transplant experience.

“A patient’s life expectancy is much better having a transplant than not,” Ms. Morgan said. “Furthermore, patients with a living donor kidney have a better chance at more years with a functioning kidney than patients with a deceased donor kidney. Dialysis patients should be aware of their options in order to make the best choice for themselves and their loved ones.”



Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division Welcomes New Surgeon

In response to an ever-increasing need for kidney and pancreas transplant surgeries and the program’s continuous growth, the Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division recently welcomed new transplant surgeon, Claire Morgan, MD.

Dr. Morgan joins Stuart R. Geffner, MD, Director of Transplant Surgery for Barnabas Health, and Harry Sun, MD., with Associates in Transplant and General Surgery. Together, they specialize in renal and pancreas transplantation, dialysis access, as well as general and advanced laparoscopic surgery.

Dr. Morgan will be primarily responsible for the renal and pancreas transplant program at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBIMC) and will be located on site at NBIMC. Before joining Barnabas Health, Dr. Morgan spent two years as the Assistant Professor of Surgery of Kidney and Pancreas Transplantation at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center’s (UPMC) Starzl Transplantation Institute, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh and VAMC, Pittsburgh, PA. She completed a fellowship in kidney and pancreas transplant surgery at the UPMC. She completed an additional fellowship in liver transplant and hepatobiliary surgery, a research fellowship and a surgical residency at UMDNJ-Newark, NJ. She is board-certified in surgery and her research has been published in numerous journals and books.

“I am pleased to be a member of this progressive surgical team,” remarks Dr. Morgan. “I joined Barnabas Health because of its commitment to quality patient care and expertise in both kidney and pancreas transplantation. I look forward to working with the Newark Beth Israel renal and pancreas transplant team.”

About The Living Donor Institute



The crisis in renal transplantation continues to grow as more patients wait for kidney donation than ever before. In response, the Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division of Barnabas Health created New Jersey's first and only Living Donor Institute to forge new opportunities for people who want to donate a healthy kidney to someone in need of a transplant.

The Living Donor Institute offers a comprehensive kidney transplant program which includes an increasing number of innovative living donation techniques available at only a few of the world's leading transplant centers. These techniques present opportunity for those whose medical conditions previously prevented transplantation. Living donation options available through The Living Donor Institute include:

- Living- and Emotionally-Related Donor Transplantation
- Living Donor Kidney Exchange Program; patients who have a willing living donor that is not compatible to them
- Program for Incompatible Transplants; ABO and HLA incompatible donor/recipient pairs
- Altruistic Living Donation

The world-class Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division, with programs at Saint Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston, NJ and Newark Beth Israel Medical Center in Newark NJ, is one of the world's most progressive transplant programs and one of the largest programs among 240 in the United States. In 2010, the Division achieved record-breaking volumes - performing 298 transplants, which included 135 living donor transplants.

The Division offers several locations across New Jersey with convenient access from New York and Pennsylvania. To schedule a patient evaluation, become a kidney donor or learn more about The Living Donor Institute, please visit www.transplantkidney.org or call Newark Beth Israel Medical Center at **1.877.878.7555** or Saint Barnabas Medical Center at **1.888.409.4707**.



FOR INFORMATION ON:

Kidney Transplantation, Living Donor Program, Attending a Transplant Orientation Session, Pancreas Transplantation, or Pediatric Kidney Transplantation (available only at Saint Barnabas Medical Center), please visit www.transplantkidney.org or call Newark Beth Israel Medical Center at **1.877.878.7555 or Saint Barnabas Medical Center at **1.888.409.4707**.**

Organ Donation and Obtaining an Organ Donation Card, please call the New Jersey Organ and Tissue Sharing Network at **1.800.Share.NJ or visit www.sharenj.org.**

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