

Spring/Summer 2024 Newsletter



Innovations in Organ Transplant

Helping transplanted organs last longer

On average, a kidney transplanted in the U.S. lasts 10 to 20 years, meaning transplant recipients are often faced with needing a second transplant. But what if those donated organs could last longer? Studies are underway to assess the effects of early identification and treatment of diabetes and obesity on reducing complication and increasing longevity of organ function after transplant.

Transplant equity

In February 2024, the U.S. Secretary of Health & Human Services issued a directive that authorizes the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network to collect pre-waitlist data on all patients referred to all transplant centers in the U.S. Access to this information will help increase equity in access to transplant.

Effective July 27, transplant programs are prohibited from using estimated Glomerular filtration rate (eGFR) calculations that include a race-based variable. This policy change will ensure that all patients' eGFR is calculated the same, and when they have a qualifying eGFR, they will be added to the waitlist.

For more information on initiatives, visit <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/data/dashboards-metrics/equity-in-access/>.

Alternative organs for transplantation

Many new innovative studies are taking place including bioengineered kidneys and nonhuman-to-human organ transplants. These efforts are still in the early development stages, but continued advances offer hope for the 100,000 people awaiting an organ transplant.

Employee Spotlight Sadie Mohr, Transplant Social Worker

Sadie Mohr was raised in Hale, Missouri, and moved to Albuquerque four years ago to pursue her passion of social work.



She has been a social worker for 10 years and has worked in many different facets of the field, including: community support, adoption/foster work, forensics and dialysis before landing her "dream job" in Transplant Services at Presbyterian in 2023. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends, her partner and her cats. For fun she enjoys gardening, podcasts, traveling, and hiking in the forests.

"Working as a transplant social worker has been a dream come true. Seeing how much a transplant can change a patient and their family's lives is truly remarkable," says Sadie. "I love being a part of a wonderful team that helps people make that transformation in their lives. It feels like I've won the lottery of jobs."



Scan this QR code to visit our website for more information about Presbyterian Transplant Services and living donation options. You also can call our office for more information at (505) 841-1434 or toll free at (800) 597-7217.

Donate Life Month Flag-raising Ceremony

Earlier this year, the Presbyterian Transplant Services team hosted its seventh annual flag-raising ceremony to honor organ and tissue donors. Each year during the month of April, Donate Life America celebrates National Donate Life Month, raising awareness of the lifesaving impact of organ, eye, and/or tissue donors, and honoring those who have saved lives through the gift of donation. This year, April was dedicated to all donor Super Stars. A decision to be an organ, eye and/or tissue donor gives hope and light to the 100,000 people on the national transplant waiting list who are hoping for a second chance at life. For more information about Donate Life Month, please visit <https://donatelifenet/news/april-is-national-donate-life-month/>.



National Kidney foundation (NKF) NM Kidney Walk

Presbyterian Transplant Services is corporate sponsor and leading fundraiser for the National Kidney Foundation New Mexico Kidney Walk. The walk is a vital source of support as we provide real-time assistance for those in need. More than 80 cents of every dollar donated goes to research, patient services, professional education, public health education, and community services. For more information about the NM Kidney Walk, please visit <https://www.kidneywalk.org/newmexico>.



First Steps to Transplant

Presbyterian, in collaboration with the National Kidney Foundation and UNM, participated in the first annual free seminar that provided information to patients and families regarding transplant and organ donation. The program was in person, with concurrent sessions in English and Spanish. For more information on local and online educational opportunities, please visit <https://www.kidney.org/>.

IMPORTANT! If you or someone you know is in the process of waiting for a kidney transplant and have the option to change insurance providers during an open enrollment period, please contact your transplant social worker or transplant office to discuss the importance of verifying insurance for transplant before changing insurance providers.

Presbyterian Transplant Services currently accepts the following insurance providers:

- Amerigroup Medicare
- BCBS Commercial (limited as some plans have exclusions)
- BCBS Medicare **PPO ONLY**
- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Optum Health - UHC, NMMIP, True Health
- PHP Commercial, ASO, Centennial and Medicare
- Tricare
- Western Sky Community Care Medicare and Centennial (also known as Wellcare by Allwell)

Employee Spotlight Laurie Pugsley, Transplant Social Worker

Laurie Pugsley lived in Philadelphia prior to moving to New Mexico 20 years ago. Laurie obtained her master's degree in social work from Temple University. She began her social work career working with people who had HIV/AIDS. From there she shifted into hospice and then Presbyterian Transplant Services, where she's worked for 12 years.

Laurie resonates with a line from the movie Patch Adams: "You treat an illness, you win or lose. You treat a person, you win every time." Working as a transplant social worker allows her to incorporate this philosophy into the workplace. "I so enjoy my work as a transplant social worker," says Laurie. "I feel honored to be able to support patients as they navigate a new organ and all it requires to be successful." For joy, she likes to play outside, snowshoe in the Sandias or walk her dogs on the Bosque, listen to live music at outdoor venues and camp with her husband and friends.

