

# Fall/Winter 2024 Newsletter



## POST TRANSPLANT CARE: GOOD INFORMATION TO KNOW WHILE YOU WAIT

As you await your kidney or kidney and pancreas transplant, it is important to stay informed so that you are prepared when the time arrives for you to get your transplant! Here is some general information to assist you.

Following your transplant surgery, you will spend approximately 4-6 days in the hospital. Occasionally, some patients will need to stay longer. In some instances, your new kidney will have what is called "delayed graft function." This means that the kidney may need some time to start fully functioning. If this happens, you may require temporary dialysis for a few days or a few weeks after the transplant surgery until the new kidney begins to do its job. It is important to remember that this can happen, and it does not mean that the new kidney is not going to work. It just may need a little help in the beginning.

After transplant, you will need to have a caregiver, either a family member or friend, to be with you for 24 hours a day for the first two to three weeks after transplant. They will help you manage your medications, drive you to your transplant follow-up and lab appointments, and monitor your blood pressure and other vital signs while you are recovering from surgery. Transplant is a big transition from dialysis, and it is essential to have someone to help you until you are fully recovered.

Every weekday that you are in the hospital, your transplant coordinator will arrange to visit you and your caregiver for post-transplant education sessions. We will go over all your discharge planning and at home care instructions. When you are discharged from the hospital you will be provided with a post-transplant discharge binder. It will have a list of all your medications and how to take them, your follow up appointments, and logs for you to monitor your blood pressure and other vital signs, as well as your daily fluid intake and urine output. Most importantly, it will have the direct contact numbers for your post-transplant coordinator and the on-call coordinator who is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Your transplant team is always available to you!

It is very important that you follow the plan of care provided by your transplant team. You will get labs drawn every Monday and Thursday morning for the first eight weeks after transplant. You will also be seen by your transplant surgeon and your transplant nephrologist every week for at least the first four weeks after transplant. This allows your transplant team to monitor your new kidney function, adjust medications and quickly identify any complications.

After your transplant you will be required to take medications every day for as long as you have your new functioning kidney. These medications are called anti-rejection or immunosuppressant medications, and they prevent your body from attacking or "rejecting" your new kidney. Sometimes, the medications can cause side effects, but most symptoms can be treated and will resolve. It is very important that you communicate any side effects with your post-transplant coordinator and do not skip your medications.

You will be followed at the transplant clinic for a full year after transplant. At that time, if your transplant providers feel it is appropriate, your care will be transitioned back to your primary kidney doctor. However, the transplant team will always be available to you for any questions or concerns.

Please contact your transplant team if you any have questions at (505) 841-1434 or visit our website at [phs.org/transplant](https://phs.org/transplant).



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.

### Employee Spotlight Ethan Hatchett



Ethan Hatchett was born in Dallas, TX, but lived most of his adult life in

Colorado in the Denver metro area. He currently lives in Cochiti Lake with his wife, Laura, and five furry feline children. He enjoys outdoor activities, cycling and walking in the summer and snowshoeing in the winter. Ethan has been an RN since 2008. He has some early experience in medical-surgical and ICU but moved into dialysis care afterwards. Ethan himself had a kidney transplant in 2007, so nephrology nursing quickly became his passion. He worked in dialysis full time until October of 2022 when he found his dream opportunity with Presbyterian Transplant Services as a post-transplant coordinator. Being a transplant recipient himself, he feels drawn to the patients and the work. In his words "I can't think of a better way to pay it forward than getting the opportunity to do what I do every day." A quote from an anonymous person that he strongly feels defines his purpose is "We do not choose our beginning, we do not choose our end, but in the moments in between, we choose who we are."

**Employee Spotlight**  
**Jera Jones**



Jera Jones grew up in Ogden, Utah. She initially travelled to New Mexico while in her early twenties to attend a spiritual seminar and ended up living in a Volkswagen Vanagon outside of Ojo Caliente. She essentially never left New Mexico and continued to live in many rural areas before settling in Santa Fe. She received her associate degree in nursing from Santa Fe Community College and then moved to Albuquerque to complete her BSN from the University of New Mexico. She began her nursing career in 2008 in the Medical Cardiac ICU at UNM Hospital and after several years became a critical care flight nurse. Jera has also had the great privilege of working with the UNM CTSC research team, UNMH home health care, and was the clinical education chair for the UNM Newborn Transport Team—all of which prepared her for what she proudly refers to as her “most rewarding job,” working as a transplant coordinator with the Presbyterian Transplant Team. “I still remember my interview with the transplant team and knowing that I had found a truly special job and a truly special team to work with...and I still feel that way more than five years later!”

Outside of work, Jera enjoys spending time with her husband, Randall, who she is certain is the best husband in the world (mostly 😊) and their two perfect dogs, Stella and Althea. She still enjoys #vanlife. However, she traded in the Vanagon for a Ford Transit Van that Randall built out and her family has driven from coast to coast. Mostly though, she loves stories of soul triumphing over ego and relishes the small victories as she strives to continuously create her own triumphant story.

**IMPORTANT!** Insurance is an important decision in your healthcare. It is also very important when you are listed or working to become listed for transplant with our program. Insurance is more complex than ever, and we do not want it to be a barrier to transplant for you.

Open enrollment is right around the corner! If there are changes to your insurance, it's important to make sure those changes don't affect your ability to be transplanted with our program, so please contact the transplant social worker or transplant office at (505) 841-1434 to discuss further.

The Presbyterian Transplant team is in the process of updating the current insurance coverage list and will include it in the Spring 2025 Newsletter.



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