



Contact:

Lubna Ekramoddoullah
Senior Public Affairs Officer
Provincial Health
Services Authority

lekramod@phsa.ca
604-675-7459

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

BC Transplant performs 5,000th organ transplant

VANCOUVER – BC Transplant, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, reached a significant milestone this October. Over 5,000 life-saving organ transplants have been performed since B.C.'s first organ transplant in 1968.

"Reaching this milestone of 5,000 organ transplants is a testament to the generosity of British Columbians," said Kevin Falcon, Minister of Health Services. "Living donors and the families of deceased donors made a choice that has given thousands of British Columbians the gift of life, which is why I encourage everyone to do their part and register through BC Transplant's Organ Donor Registry."

Debbie Talbot knows first hand what it is like to donate a kidney to someone in need. She did just that in September 2010, when she donated her left kidney to Chad Nishimura, the 20-year-old son of her friend of 30 years. "Deciding to donate my kidney wasn't a hard decision," she said. "I was so thankful that I was a match and that I was able to help. It's amazing to see him now; he's doing so well."

"It's so special that Debbie would do this for me, especially since we found that no one in my family was a match," said Nishimura, who was born with polycystic kidney disease. "I'm so grateful; she has given me years of healthy living to look forward to. I'm feeling great!"

So far in 2010, BC Transplant has performed over 220 transplants, surpassing the 211 that were done in 2009. There are currently more than 370 British Columbians waiting to receive an organ transplant.

Over the past 30 years, significant advances have been made in living donation, which has allowed more people to donate. It used to be that living donation was restricted to close family members with a strong genetic link, but with improvements in anti-rejection medications, this is no longer the case, as spouses, friends, and co-workers routinely donate.

Advances in deceased donation have also been made in recent years, with expansion of deceased donation criteria to include donation after cardiac death. Prior to this, deceased organ donation was limited to patients who died as a result of brain death. The first organ donation after cardiac death in Western Canada was performed at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver in 2008.

"We know that many more than the thousands of patients we've already helped will require transplants in future years," said Dr. Greg Grant, Provincial Executive Director of BC Transplant. "Organs are a precious resource and there continues to be a gap between the number of patients requiring a transplant and the number of organs available for transplantation. This is why we are investing in our living donor programs and expansion of deceased donation to include donation after cardiac death."

It doesn't take long to show support for those waiting for a transplant. BC Transplant has made it simple. In just a few minutes you can register your decision online at www.transplant.bc.ca, B.C.'s Organ Donor Registry. Register today!

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Note to editors: If you would like to interview Debbie Talbot, Chad Nishimura, or a BC Transplant expert, please contact PHSA Communications at 604-675-7459.

BACKGROUNDER

BC Transplant, established in 1986, is a comprehensive health care organization responsible for all aspects of organ transplant in British Columbia. Its role includes:

- Pre-transplant recipient and donor assessment;
- Organ recovery from both deceased and living donors and organ allocation;
- Post-transplant care at regional clinics across the province;
- Drug coverage
- Operating BC's provincial Organ Donor Registry
- Professional and public education programs;
- Setting provincial standards and guidelines on donation and transplantation;

BC Transplant manages the provincial Organ Donor Registry, the only one of its kind in Canada. **More than 774,000 British Columbians have registered** their decision on the Registry. **This represents approximately 17% of the provincial population.**

Today in British Columbia, **there are more than 370 people on the waitlist** to receive a solid organ transplant.

Why was the Organ Donor Registry created?

BC's Organ Donor Registry (ODR) was created to provide British Columbians' with a secure and legal way to record first person consent for organ donation.

The Registry is accessible to health professionals in every hospital in BC, via a secure online system. Health care professionals can search the Registry for a record of an individual's decision using their Personal Health Number (BC CareCard).

The Registry offers four choices, including the option not to be an organ donor. It's important that every British Columbian register regardless of their decision.

The Registry removes the need for family members to make the decision about organ donation at end-of-life.

How does it work?

There are two ways a person can register on the Organ Donor Registry

1. Individuals can register their decision online at: www.transplant.bc.ca. The registration form is signed using digital signature technology. The registrant will receive a confirmation email once their registration form has been verified.
2. An individual can register using a hard copy (paper) registration form. The completed registration form must be mailed or faxed back to BC Transplant (BCT), where it is scanned into a secure computerized database.

An individual can confirm if they have already registered on the Organ Donor Registry by visiting: www.transplant.bc.ca or **calling 1-800-663-6189**.

GENERAL BC TRANSPLANT INFORMATION:

BC Transplant contracts for inpatient and outpatient services from three transplant hospitals as well as services from seven regional post-transplant clinics throughout BC for outpatient care. The transplant centres include: Vancouver General Hospital, St. Paul's Hospital and BC Children's Hospital. The seven regional clinics include: Victoria Royal Jubilee Hospital, Kamloops Royal Inland Hospital, Kelowna General Hospital, Penticton Regional Hospital, Prince George Regional Hospital, and Trail Regional Hospital, along with one free-standing clinic serving the Fraser Valley.

BC Transplant is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), one of six health authorities in British Columbia. The PHSA is accountable for managing the quality, coordination, accessibility and cost of selected province wide health-care programs and services.