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MEDIA RELEASE

January 20, 2011

For Immediate Release

BC Transplant kicks off its 25th anniversary by setting a new record for organ transplants

Vancouver – BC Transplant, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year and today announced it has set a new record for organ transplants.

In 2010, BC Transplant performed 295 transplants, a record-breaking number that surpasses 2009's number of 211 and the previous record of 266 in 2008.

"This is a great achievement for British Columbia. Transplants depend on organ donation and the availability of organs for transplant, and I would like to acknowledge the living donors and families of deceased donors who made the difficult decision to donate organs that saved the lives of thousands of people across the province," says Colin Hansen, Minister of Health Services. "I encourage everyone to learn more about registering to become an organ donor through BC Transplant's Organ Donor Registry."

"It was an honour to carry out what I knew my husband wanted—that from his tragedy, he would enable someone else to continue and embrace the beauty of life," says Bonnie, whose husband passed away last year. "Bill always wanted to help people lead a fuller life. He achieved this with his last selfless act of organ donation. For this, we are truly grateful."

Not only were there a record number of overall transplants, but in 2010, BC Transplant also performed:

- 189 kidney transplants (previous record was 172 in 2007);
- 53 liver transplants (47 in 2008);
- 10 double lung transplants (six in 2008).

"The milestones reached by BC Transplant demonstrate PHSA's commitment to deliver excellent patient care and ultimately improve the health of all British Columbians who need our services," says Wynne Powell, Chair, Board of Directors, PHSA.

George Keulen knows the real value of these numbers. He received a double lung transplant in 2010. "Words such as 'amazing', 'life changing' or 'humbling' can't begin to describe what my transplant has done for me, and the depth of gratitude I have to my donor and their family," says George. "The 18 months I spent waiting for my double lung transplant was like being on a sinking ship and hoping the rescue boat would make it on time. The only reason I am alive today is because someone else made the decision to give, and every breath that my transplanted lungs take are a testament to that."

There are many factors that contribute to the number of organ transplants performed each year, such as organ suitability and match on the waitlist as well as awareness of and registration on B.C.'s Organ Donor Registry. In addition, programs such as Living Donor Expense Reimbursement and the National Paired Kidney Exchange (operated by Canadian Blood Services) enable more people to

be living donors, and deceased organ donation is no longer limited to patients who died as a result of brain death but now includes cardiac death.

“We are excited about having set a new record in the number of transplants performed because it means there are hundreds of patients who are now able to live healthier lives,” says Dr. Greg Grant, Provincial Executive Director, BC Transplant. “We will continue to work towards increasing this number and improve care for patients still waiting for a transplant.”

It takes only a few minutes to register your decision on organ donation on B.C.'s Organ Donor Registry at www.transplant.bc.ca. What are you waiting for? Do it today!

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Note to editors:

Interviews are available with:

Lower Mainland

- George Keulen, double lung recipient
- Jane Miller, heart recipient
- Chris Kirby, heart recipient

Vancouver Island

- Bonnie, wife of donor

Other recipients or families of donors may be available.

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BACKGROUND

BC Transplant is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), one of six health authorities in British Columbia. Established in 1986, BC Transplant is a comprehensive healthcare organization responsible for all aspects of organ transplant in B.C. Its role includes:

- Overseeing pre-transplant recipient and donor assessment;
- Organ recovery from both deceased and living donors and organ allocation;
- Post-transplant drug coverage;
- Operating B.C.'s provincial Organ Donor Registry;
- Professional and public education programs;
- Setting provincial standards and guidelines on donation and transplantation and for post-transplant care at regional clinics across the province.

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

Transplants Performed in 2010

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| Kidney-Deceased | 92 |
| Kidney-Living Donor | 97 |
| Pancreas-Kidney | 2 |
| Pancreas | 3 |
| Pancreas Islet | 10 |
| Liver-Deceased | 46 |
| Liver-Living Donor | 7 |
| Heart | 22 |
| Single Lung | 6 |
| Double Lung | 10 |
| Total | 295 |

B.C.'s **Organ Donor Registry** is the only one of its kind in Canada. It was created to provide British Columbians with a secure and legal way to record first person consent for organ donation and is accessible to healthcare professionals in every hospital in B.C. Healthcare professionals can search the registry for a record of an individual's decision using their Personal Health Number (BC CareCard).

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

More than 781,460 British Columbians have registered their decision on the registry. This represents approximately 17% of the provincial population.

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.
2. An individual can register using a hard copy (paper) registration form.

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**.