



MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release



Life-Saving Transplant Programs Go Platinum!

VANCOUVER – This year, BC Transplant, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, is pleased to celebrate two significant milestones—the 20th anniversary of both the liver and the lung transplant programs in BC.

For the past 20 years, British Columbians suffering from end-stage liver or lung failure have been offered hope through transplantation—a procedure that has grown from a purely experimental form of treatment to the standard method of care it is today.

“Organ donation is literally the gift of life,” said Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon. “That we have reached the platinum anniversary of both liver and lung transplant programs is a testimony to the selflessness of British Columbians and the teams at BC Transplant.”

Continued improvements in medical techniques and anti-rejection drugs over the past two decades have steadily increased a patient’s chance of survival post transplant. Survival rates five years post liver transplant increased from 61 per cent in 1989 to 73 per cent in 2007, and for post lung transplant patients, the rate rose from 40 per cent to 64 per cent, respectively.

The numbers of liver and lung transplants performed each year have been steadily rising. In 1989 when the programs were first established, one or two transplants took place each year. The numbers have gradually climbed to reach a total of 14 lung transplants and 47 liver transplants performed in 2008.

Celebrating the benefits of transplantation are the patients themselves. Receiving a transplant has meant, for many, a second chance of life—to be able to work, travel, raise a family, and become contributing members of society again.

Diagnosed with a rare liver condition at birth, Colin Yip had barely a week to live when he received his first liver transplant in the Fall of 1995. Yip was just 33 years old, and had been married just a year to his wife Cynthia. Fourteen years later, he is a successful chartered accountant, and the father of two children – Sheriden aged 11 and Madison aged 9. He is eternally grateful to the donor that gave him the gift of life. “Life has become extremely precious to me since my transplant. Just to be able to spend time with my family and enjoy the simple things in life makes me a better husband to my wife and father to my children,” says Yip.

Caring for the desperately ill, whose only chance of survival is the gift of organ donation, has had a profound effect on the health professionals working in the field of transplantation. Dr. Bob Levy, Director of the Lung Program at BC Transplant is no exception. “I continue to be amazed by the tremendous progress we’ve made in applying this treatment option over the past 20 years,” says Levy. “The miraculous recoveries and successes we witness almost every day motivate us to do more to make transplant a reality for all our patients.”

Liver physician, Dr. Eric Yoshida of BC Transplant, feels the same. “Each and every one of us in the transplant community cannot help but have been affected by the time we have spent working in this discipline. I, for one, am definitely a changed man in terms of how I treat others and what I believe in,” says Yoshida.

The advancements in transplantation are encouraging; however, there are still patients on the waiting list who will not survive due to the lack of organs available for transplant.

Organ donation saves lives. Register your decision on BC’s Organ Donor Registry at



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About BC Transplant

BC Transplant (BCT), established in 1986, is a comprehensive health care organization responsible for all aspects of organ transplant in British Columbia, including; pre-transplant assessment, organ recovery and donor matching, follow-up care at regional clinics across the province, research and clinical trials, and public education. BC Transplant is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority.

Over the past four decades, more than 4,500 British Columbians have received a life-saving organ transplant.