



## MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### BC Heart Recipient Alive, Kicking and *Running* 20 years post transplant

Celebrating this success story and more on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of Heart Transplantation in BC

**Vancouver, BC** – BC Transplant, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, and the Providence Heart + Lung Institute at St. Paul's Hospital are pleased to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the heart transplant program in British Columbia. Through continued innovation, and collaboration, over 325 life-saving heart transplants have been performed in British Columbia.

In 1988, the first year of the program, two heart transplants were performed at VGH, where the program was first established. In total, 108 heart transplants were performed at VGH before the program relocated to St. Paul's in 1996. In 2007, the heart program became part of the Providence Heart + Lung Institute at St. Paul's Hospital.

"This anniversary is a time to reflect on the incredible advances in health care over the last 20 years," says George Abbott, Minister of Health Services. "These new treatments and technologies are thanks to the dedication and passion of those working in the health care system, who continue to inspire the best in patient care today."

Tony Beeftink of Salmon Arm was the second patient to receive a heart transplant in BC. Struck with a virus that attacked his heart at the age of 37, Tony, the father of three children, was close to death before receiving his transplant in December 1988. Twenty years later, Tony has not looked back. A teacher in his local high school, and a keen runner, he is never complacent about the gift of life he received 20 years ago.

"Who knew that I could be so close to not making it all those years ago, but still around today to talk to you about my experience," says Beeftink. "My transplant has given me the opportunity to see my three children grow up and to share in those life experiences with my wife, Alana. I've walked both my daughters down the aisle and now Alana and I are about to be grandparents. I'm looking forward to another chapter in my life that would not have been possible without my transplant."

Transplantation has now become a well-recognized treatment option for people with critical heart failure, and new advances in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation – many developed in part at the Providence Heart + Lung Institute at St. Paul's Hospital – are improving the quality of life of British Columbians at risk, or suffering from, heart failure.

"We are proud that our cardiac program at St. Paul's Hospital is the provincial centre for heart transplantation," says Dianne Doyle, President and CEO of Providence Health Care. "Over the last 50 years the cardiac program has transformed into a world-renowned academic health sciences centre, recognized for its innovation and talent. From breakthrough research, to mechanical heart pumps, to our Healthy Heart Program, our skilled team of researchers and clinicians continue to make a difference in the lives of British Columbians."

"Last year we saw a record number of transplants performed in the province, including a record 23 heart transplants," says Bill Barrable, Provincial Executive Director, BC Transplant. "None of this would have been possible without the generosity of organ donors and the collaboration of our partner hospitals."

**Contact:**

**Leah Lockhart**  
Communications Specialist  
Providence Health Care  
604-806-8882  
Media pager: 604-252-4261  
[llockhart@providencehealth.bc.ca](mailto:llockhart@providencehealth.bc.ca)

**Lisa Despins**  
Communications Specialist  
BC Transplant  
604-877-2240  
or  
1-800-663-6189  
[lisa\\_despins@bcts.hnet.bc.ca](mailto:lisa_despins@bcts.hnet.bc.ca)

### **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 manages the provincial Organ Donor Registry, the only one of its kind in Canada. Close to 700,000 British Columbians have registered their decision on the Registry. This represents 16% of the provincial population. Registering only takes a minute online at [www.transplant.bc.ca](http://www.transplant.bc.ca).

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

BC Transplant is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority.

### **About the Providence Heart + Lung Institute at St. Paul's Hospital**

The Providence Heart + Lung Institute at St. Paul's Hospital merges and integrates all of Providence's heart and lung research, education and care programs, creating a dynamic academic health sciences centre that is the only one of its kind in Canada. The cardiac program provides a full spectrum of care for patients with critical heart failure – from medications, to heart transplant and rehabilitation.

The B.C. Acute Heart Failure Program, part of the Providence Heart + Lung Institute at St. Paul's Hospital, is the only program in B.C. which provides the full range of specialized care to patients with critical heart failure. It is currently the biggest and busiest program of its kind in Canada, now receiving referrals not only from B.C., but also from other provinces such as Alberta and Manitoba. The program is a national leader in Ventricular Assist Device (VAD) implants, equipping critically ill heart failure patients with mechanical heart pumps to keep them alive until they can receive a heart transplant. [www.heartandlung.ca](http://www.heartandlung.ca)