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MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Transplant numbers continue to set records in BC

VANCOUVER - April 22nd to 29th is National Organ Donor Awareness Week, and transplant numbers in BC continue to set records. Between April 2006 and April of this year, 270 organ transplants were performed in the province. This compares to 190 during the same period the year previous. Of the 270 transplants, 104 (nearly 40%) were living donor kidney transplants—the highest ever in BC.

“This is great news for our patients,” says Bill Barrable, Provincial Executive Director, BC Transplant Society. “One of the critical success factors is our unique activity based funding model, which rewards hospitals for performing more living donor transplants, which are classified as elective not emergency surgery.”

The BC Transplant Society’s funding model is the only one of its kind in North America. In other provinces, and the US, hospitals receive transplant funding, which is absorbed into its global budget. This removes the incentive to perform additional transplants because the hospital receives the funding independent of the number of transplants performed. In BC, the Transplant Society sends funding directly to the hospitals for transplantation by paying a fixed rate for each kidney transplant and living donor’s surgery and hospital stay.

“Our clinical staff do an excellent job, and in the case of living kidney donation, transplant hospitals now set aside dedicated OR time to perform these operations, because the incentive based funding is in place,” notes Barrable. “Notwithstanding the creativity and hard work of medical and allied staff, it’s the main reason we have been able to significantly increase the number of kidney transplants performed. Consequently, BC performs more living donor transplants than many other provinces relative to the size of its population.”

“Hundreds of British Columbians are alive today simply because of the generosity of organ donors and their families as well as the dedication of the BC Transplant Society,” said Health Minister George Abbott. “Recipients of organs from living and deceased donors literally receive the gift of life.”

The increase in living donation does not lessen the need for deceased donors. Those needing a life-saving lung or heart transplant, for example, have no other option than to wait for a deceased donor. The need for life-saving organs is still critical and the public is urged to support organ donation by registering their decision on the Organ Donor Registry.

Hundreds of British Columbians are waiting for an organ transplant. What are you waiting for? Register your decision about organ donation on BC’s Organ Donor Registry. Based on public opinion surveys, 85% of British Columbians say they support organ donation and intend to register their decision, yet just 15% have done so. To register visit www.transplant.bc.ca or telephone 1.800.663.6189.

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Over the past four decades, more than 4,000 British Columbians have received a life-saving organ transplant. The BC Transplant Society is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority.