

Ervin Ruzics, MD Urology

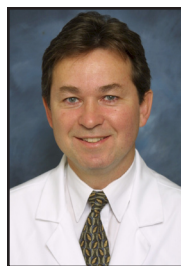
Medical Director,
Kidney Transplant Center

Congratulations on achieving 100% one-year graft survival for five years in a row. Do you consider St. Joseph Hospital's Kidney Transplant Program to be the best in the nation?

I wouldn't make such a claim although we are certainly in good company. Of the half dozen U.S. adult transplant programs to achieve 100% success St. Joseph Hospital's program has consistently had the highest volume of transplants. In addition, our program is one of only a dozen or so with outcomes statistically better than expected. Of these statistically better programs St. Joseph has had the highest graft survival each year.

Why do you think St. Joseph Hospital has outcomes statistically better than expected? The Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR) has calculated our one year graft survival to be statistically higher than expected based on donor and recipient risk factors.

Graft survival is reduced by death from cardiac events and irreversible rejection



mostly from non compliance and complications of opportunistic infections. SJO's top notch cardiovascular services help us correct cardiac problems pre transplant and then quickly and

expertly intervene post transplant. St. Joseph Hospital has a transplant team made up of Certified Clinical Transplant Coordinators, a Nurse Practitioner, Social Workers, a Transplant Pharmacist and Dietitian who carefully monitor and enforce compliance with the complex first-year regimen. I personally manage immunosuppression, antimicrobial prophylaxis, rejection and infection surveillance and triage – all issues during the first year. This unbroken continuity of care during the first year reduces delays in evaluation and management of often subtle but potentially life-threatening complications unique to transplant patients. Collaboration and close follow up with the outstanding St. Joseph Hospital nephrologists is essential to maintaining good outcomes.

Why is St. Joseph Hospital so interested in live donor transplants?

Many patients and their families don't understand the gravity of their circumstances. Transplant candidates have a life expectancy of only 10 years. Transplantation doubles life expectancy and substantially improves health. For the 77,000 patients on the waitlist, only 10,000 deceased donor kidneys are available annually, so the wait for a deceased donor kidney is more than seven years. Many patients won't survive or maintain their candidacy long enough to get a kidney. These patients' only chance for survival is a living donor. When loved ones hear these sobering facts many are quick to volunteer. Anyone emotionally connected to the patient can be evaluated as a donor; blood relation is no longer necessary. We go to great lengths to accomplish live donor transplantation, including using ABO blood type incompatible and cross match incompatible donors, previously thought to be impossible to use.

What's coming down the pike for the Kidney Transplant Center?

Right now we are looking forward to moving our program to the new Cancer Center building. This will tremendously help our patients be able to obtain all of their services at one site.



A PUBLICATION FROM THE ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL MEDICAL STAFF OFFICE

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