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ACTUAL ARTICLE WITH IDENTIFYING INFORMATION CHANGED

Colorado Transplant Institute Marks a Decade of Dedicated Transplantation Care

This year marks ten years since Colorado Transplant Institute was founded to consolidate leading-edge kidney, kidney/pancreas, liver, heart, and blood and marrow stem cell transplantation in a single location. Three of the Institute's surgeons discuss the Institute's beginnings, the transplantations available there, and detail an innovative program allowing kidney transplant for patients whose willing donors are not a match.

Boulder-based Colorado Transplant Institute provides access to comprehensive, leading-edge solid organ transplantation for adults as well as blood and marrow stem cell transplantation for both adults and children. In 1999, Boulder's best transplantation programs were assembled inside Colorado Transplant Institute, the Advocate Healthcare System and its facilities in the South Colorado Medical Center. This year, Colorado Transplant Institute, which complements its transplantation services with research and educational components, is celebrating its tenth anniversary.

"Our goal was to be a full-service program and to provide high-quality transplant therapies in all these areas, making it easier for physicians and payers to work with us so the patients would have lots of options when they were referred here," says Simon Vagor, M.D., medical director of Colorado Transplant Institute. "We wanted to have unsurpassed delivery of transplant treatments, develop cutting-edge research, and be involved in

educating people about transplant, but we also wanted the programs to be recognized for their outcomes, volumes, and the innovations that went along with that."

Those goals were met from the inception and continue to be met today, thanks to a staff of skilled, experienced specialists. Dr. Vagor credits Frank Miller, M.D., who leads the Abdominal Organ Transplant group, for the Institute's outstanding outcomes in kidney transplantation, adding that his program is among the top in the country with regard to long-term kidney graft and patient survival rates.

"Our pancreas transplant program is one of the most active in the state," adds Dr. Miller, "and those are done primarily for patients with Type I diabetes and kidney disease."

The Institute's Heart Failure and Heart Transplant Program is overseen by Mitchell Fleming, M.D., F.A.C.C., and his heart team includes two cardiologists who specialize in treating end-stage cardiac disease and the placement of ventricular assist devices.

Under the direction of Paul Frehley, M.D., F.A.C.S., notes Dr. Miller, the Institute's liver transplant program has the best results, the best patient survival, and best outcomes of any liver transplant program in Colorado, and its success rates rank it as one of the top programs in the United States.

"In the adult stem cell program," says Dr. Vagor, "we will transplant 170 to 200 patients this year, making us one of the largest blood marrow programs in the country. We perform autologous transplant using the patient's own stem cells as well as a related donor's; we do transplant using unrelated donors from the National Marrow Donor program; and we do umbilical cord blood transplant in adults."

CONSOLIDATED TRANSPLANT CARE

Many facilities offer multiple types of transplantation, but Dr. Vagor says their level of integration cannot match that of Colorado Transplant Institute. He explains that the Institute's integrated system allows its physicians and staff, in collaboration with the hospital-based team, to improve patient care throughout the treatment process, maximizing the patient's outcome.

Dr. Miller encourages anyone in need of kidney, kidney/pancreas, liver, heart, or adult or pediatric blood marrow transplantation to contact Colorado Transplant Institute. "We've got everything that patients require to be successful with their transplants, and we want people to know that we're here to help and to assist with any transplant-related care or questions."

[SIDEBAR]

Finding the Perfect Match

The Incompatible Donor Program at Colorado Transplant Institute offers a chance for kidney transplantation for patients who have someone willing to donate a kidney to them but are prevented from doing so because the patient's blood contains antibodies that do not match the donor. Justin Philips, M.D., Ph.D., directs this innovative program that he created in 2007 with the objective of identifying a way to use these donors.

"We enter all the kidney patients who have incompatible donors into our computer database," says Dr. Philips. "The goal is to find matching pairs so that a donor who's not compatible with their recipient could donate to a different recipient and that recipient's donor could donate to the other recipient."

In March 2008, the first such *exchange transplant* was done. To date, the program has completed 48 exchange transplants, making it the leading single-center program in the United States offering exchange transplant. In just the last 18 months, the program has also done 12 two-way exchange transplants and eight three-way exchange transplants.

SERVING BOULDER AND BEYOND

"We'd like to create more local, regional, and national awareness of our program," says Dr. Philips, who emphasizes the life-changing option exchange transplant offers ESRD (End-Stage Renal Disease) patients living in Boulder, throughout Colorado and across the United States whose living donors are not compatible.

Dr. Philips feels strongly that every ESRD patient whose healthy, willing donor is not a match needs to be evaluated for an exchange transplant and included in an exchange database. "With the waiting time on the transplant list as long as four to six years or more," says Dr. Philips, "the advantages of live donor kidney transplantation are dramatic."

[END OF SIDEBAR]

The Colorado Transplant Institute's kidney, pancreas and liver programs are located at 7755 Bledsoe Millen Place, Boulder, Colorado 75395. Call 555-456-8532 for the kidney and pancreas programs and 555-456-4998 for the liver transplant program. Kidney, pancreas, and liver transplants are performed at Advocate Specialty and Transplant Hospital, 9022 Edgar Ranzel Drive.

The Blood and Marrow Stem Cell Transplant program for adults is located at Advocate Hospital, 44 Spartan Place, 555-547-0086.

For more information about Colorado Transplant Institute, please visit www.website.org.

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