



NEWS RELEASE

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Maine Transplant Center Kicks Off National Kidney Month with Successful Transplant Made Possible by Living Donor *100 Mainers are waiting for kidney transplants*

PORTLAND, Maine — The Maine Transplant Center at Maine Medical Center kicked off National Kidney Month today with another successful kidney transplant made possible by a living donor.

“Donating a kidney is a life-saving decision for someone in need of a transplant, and the need for donor organs is nothing short of a national public health crisis,” said Dr. John Vella, Director of the Maine Transplant Program at MMC.

Today, close to 100 Mainers are waiting for kidney transplants. While it is commonly family members who offer to be kidney donors, there are often spouses, friends, members of the community, or people from the same place of worship who can be highly successful kidney donors. Being related is not a requirement to donate a kidney.

Facts about living donations:

- ***Who can be a living donor?*** Donors are often a close relative such as a parent, brother or sister, son or daughter but may also be individuals who are

not related but have an established emotional relationship with the recipient such as a partner or close friend. Sometimes a donor and a recipient may be incompatible with each other because of blood group or tissue-type and in this case it may be possible for them to be paired with another donor and recipient in the same situation. This means that each recipient will benefit from a transplant that they would otherwise not have had (this is called paired donation). Donors may also offer to give a kidney to someone who is on the waiting list for a transplant but whom they have never met before (this is called non-directed altruistic donation).

- ***How will I know if I can be a donor?*** You will have a thorough medical and surgical and psychological evaluation to establish that you are fit and healthy to donate. Your current health status will be considered, as well as your motivation for donation and support available following your surgery. Members of the healthcare team involved in your evaluation include physicians, surgeons, nurses, financial counselors, dieticians, pharmacists, social workers, and an Independent Living Donor Advocate.
- ***How safe is it to be a donor?*** Living donation has an excellent safety record. The first living donor surgery was done in Boston in December of 1954. The surgical techniques have evolved over almost 60 years and now donation is possible through small abdominal incisions and a 2-3 day hospital admission. Currently, nearly 6000 people each year donate a kidney and return to their daily lives within 4-6 weeks.

For more information, visit www.mmc.org/living-donation

About Maine Medical Center

Maine Medical Center (MMC), recognized as the number-one ranked hospital in Maine by *U.S. News and World Report for 2016-2017*, a complete health care resource for the people of Greater Portland and the entire state, as well as northern New England. Incorporated in 1864, MMC is the state's largest medical center, licensed for 637 beds and employing nearly 6,500 people. MMC's unique role as both a community hospital and a referral center requires an unparalleled depth and breadth

of services, including an active educational program and a world-class biomedical research center. As a nonprofit institution, Maine Medical Center provides nearly 23 percent of all the charity care delivered in Maine. MMC is a member of the MaineHealth system, a growing family of health care services in northern New England. For more information, visit www.mmc.org.

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