Many kidney transplant candidates are unable to receive organs from willing and medically suitable living donors due to either blood type or immunologic incompatibility. Paired donor exchange allows these donors to be utilized by identifying compatible donor and recipient pairs elsewhere in the nation. Once identified, kidneys may be exchanged between pairs, such that the donor from pair A may give his or her kidney to the recipient from pair B, and vice versa. This may be extended to include multiple pairs in three-way, four-way or even more extended swaps.

The goals of paired donation are to shorten wait times and make living donor kidney transplantation available to a greater number of patients. Successful implementation of a paired donor exchange program requires the participation of multiple transplant programs (in order to provide an adequate pool of donors and candidates) and careful evaluation of potential donors. Members of the MCGHealth Transplant Team will discuss this option in detail with eligible candidates and assist them throughout the paired donation process.

Please do not hesitate to call our offices for more information regarding the MCGHealth Paired Donation Program.
Gloria is our post transplant social worker. She received her bachelor’s degree from Augusta State University followed by her master’s degree in social work from the University of South Carolina. She is licensed in the state of Georgia as a Master Social Worker. She worked as a social worker in a dialysis setting for 16 years before joining our transplant team in 2003. She continues her education and contributions to the social work field through mentoring, professional organization memberships and committee appointments.

Gloria begins caring for patients post-transplant, before they leave the hospital. She participates in the interdisciplinary planning process and coordinates post hospital care to include durable medical equipment and supplies, as well as other resources necessary for the patient/family, to provide a timely and successful discharge. She also effectively uses community resources in order to integrate care, improve quality of care and decrease cost and utilization.

She works very closely with the Georgia Transplant Foundation and other grant programs in order to facilitate financial assistance, mail-order pharmacy services and accommodations for patients. She conducts an appropriate level of psycho-social assessments of post transplant patients during their hospital stay, post discharge and during clinic visits.

Gloria continues to provide services to patients after discharge as part of our post transplant clinic. She will coordinate financial and job referral workshops with available resources such as the Georgia Transplant Foundation and Vocational Rehabilitation programs of Georgia & South Carolina.

On-Site Education Available for Physicians and Dialysis Centers

We would like the opportunity to share with your facility how our program works and how we can assist your patients in achieving the goal of transplantation. Our staff can provide on-site in-service training to your team to help make the referral and wait listing process as smooth and efficient as possible. Please contact Christina Wiggins, Transplant Administrator, to schedule a visit.

Press Room

Pam Grubbs’, living donor coordinator, recipe for success was recently published in the March 3 issue of the National Living Donor Assistance Program’s electronic newsletter. The NLDAP is a national organization that assists potential living donors with the costs of their travel and hotel stay associated with donor evaluation and transplant surgery. NLDAP invited Grubbs to submit her tips because she is among the top in the nation for screening applicants, completing their applications and getting applicants to turn in their income verification documents, among other successes.
Patient Advisory Board: Your Patients Have A Voice At MCGHealth

The Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Patient Advisory Board held its first quarterly meeting in July 2008. Since then, the group of four patients has doubled and includes patients on the transplant wait list, paired donation wait list, and post transplant patients.

In addition to bringing a unique perspective, our patient advisors have assisted us in developing educational tools, process improvements and planning for future program initiatives. That’s because Patient Family Centered Care is a partnership based as much on trust and empathy as it is on advanced technology, medical science and the art of patient care. Positive results are what all of us in health care aspire to every day.

Our advisors help serve as a voice for all processes within MCGHealth. Many of our advisors have joined other hospital wide programs to help continue the partnership of Patient Family Centered Care. We recently honored our advisors by sending several to the 2009 Tom Glavine’s Spring Training red-carpet fundraiser at the Georgia Aquarium benefiting the Georgia Transplant Foundation.

Patient Family Centered Care asks us to empower patients and families so they are aware, knowledgeable and actively engaged in their own health care,” said Pat Sodomka, senior vice president of Patient Family Centered Care at MCGHealth. “What we’ve learned … is that when we involve patients and families, quality of care improves. It’s really that simple.”

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Referral Information: For Physicians and Dialysis Centers

We pride ourselves on our commitment to quality patient care, which is why we want to make your referral process as pleasant and smooth as possible.

Listed below are the documents and information necessary for timely, accurate processing of patient referrals:

- Completed Transplant Referral Form. For your convenience this can be found on our website via the Referral Information tab.
- Copy of the front and back of the patient’s insurance card(s)

We have a dedicated staff of administrative professionals, registered nurses and financial coordinators who will keep you informed via telephone, fax and written communication regarding your patient’s progress throughout the transplant evaluation process.

Orientation Class

After you refer your patient, they will be contacted to schedule the MCGHealth Transplant Orientation class. This orientation class will educate them on the transplant process, matching criteria, success rates, medications and financial issues. Educational materials will be provided during class; they can also be obtained on the program’s website. Patients will be asked to bring a picture ID and copies of all medical insurance and prescription coverage plans (Medicare, Medicaid and private).

Classes are offered several times a month. The Augusta class is offered in the morning while the Macon, Savannah and Columbia classes are offered in the evening. We encourage patients to bring along family members or care providers so they can participate in learning about our program and the transplant process. The informative class typically lasts 2.5 hrs.
Meet the Nurse Coordinators

Transplant Administrator
Christina Wiggins, RN, CCTC, MBA
Christina has been a member of the team since 2001. She received her nursing degree from the Medical College of Georgia followed by a masters degree in business from Augusta State University. She has 11 years of nursing experience, including serving as a dialysis center charge nurse.

Belinda Boedy, RN, BSN, CNN
Belinda joined the program in March 2003 as a Post Transplant Coordinator. She is a 1977 graduate of the University of Florida College of Nursing and has worked in the field of nephrology nursing for the past 25 years. She is an active member of ITNS through the Georgia Chapter.

Pamela Grubbs, RN
Pamela received her nursing degree from Augusta State University. She joined the MCGHealth Kidney and Pancreas Transplant program in 2008 as the Living Donor Coordinator. She has previously worked as a dialysis in-service nurse and as a charge nurse in both the chronic and acute dialysis settings.

Dee Hawkins, RN, BSN, CCTC
Dee came to MCGHealth in September 2002 and works as a post transplant nurse. She graduated from the Medical College of Georgia in 1999 and has 16 years of nephrology experience. She is an active member of ITNS—Georgia Chapter.

Lynn Joyner, RN
Lynn joined the team in March 2006. She has 13 years of previous experience as a chronic and acute dialysis nurse. Lynn has served the program in many different roles including Waitlist Maintenance Coordinator and is now one of the Pre-Transplant Coordinators serving both adult and pediatric patients.

Tonia Ryll, RN, BSN
Tonia joined the transplant program in August 2006 as the List Maintenance Coordinator. Prior to coming to MCGHealth, she was a charge nurse in an outpatient dialysis clinic. Tonia has a total of 16 years of nursing experience with 8 years spent in dialysis.

Amanda Wright, RN, BSN
Amanda joined the MCGHealth Transplant Program in June 2005. She started her nursing career as an Army Nurse in 1987 and then worked as a Clinical Manager and with Quality Assurance and Education in dialysis facilities for 12 years.