

# THE LIFELINK LINE

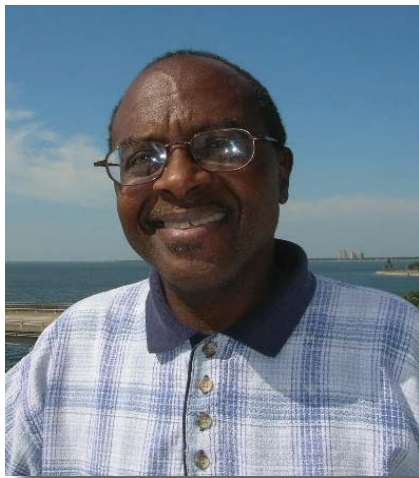
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*Providing comprehensive medical, surgical and transplant care under one roof.*

## TALLAHASSEE LOOKS TO ASSIST TRANSPLANT PATIENTS

Transplant patients are like no other. Their experiences with physicians and surgeons become life-long relationships. They have the ability to inspire and educate others by sharing their stories. Their treatment often requires the cooperation and selflessness of complete strangers. And their bodies must remain constantly tricked, so as not to recognize and destroy the cure that lives within them, thanks to a donor.



AFTER HIS PRESCRIPTION COVERAGE CHANGED, KIDNEY RECIPIENT ARTHUR CANNON SUFFERED A REJECTION EPISODE AND HOSPITALIZATION. HE IS ONE OF MANY FACING NEW CO-PAY REQUIREMENTS.

When Medicare Part D took effect in January, many transplant patients found themselves filling yet another unique niche. Their new health plans no longer provided full coverage for immunosuppressant medications, and they were unable to afford the co-pays for the prescriptions which prevent transplant rejection.

Believing the new plan's exclusions were a result of an administrative oversight, LifeLink

Foundation spearheaded efforts to clarify the issue for decision-makers in Tallahassee. Knowledgeable transplant patient advocates met with city commissioners, state senators and others to illustrate the importance of immunosuppression therapy. A viable plan was proposed to include these medications in the state health care budget. Meanwhile,

a media campaign highlighted the plight of transplant patients who -- having run out of immunosuppressants -- had already been hospitalized for rejection issues.

Senator Leslie "Les" Miller has assisted in leading the charge to help Floridians. "To have survived end stage organ disease and beaten the odds of receiving a precious resource such as an organ transplant, only to then learn the medicines which keep the organ functioning are no longer covered must be devastating," stated the Senator.

At the time of this writing, a \$3.7 million appropriation had been made in the Florida budget. It remains unclear if these funds will be enough to help all those in need. "To ensure the continued good health of these patients, this issue has to be addressed, ultimately, on the federal level," said Danny Hawke, Administrator for the LifeLink HealthCare Institute. "We've helped to create awareness for the patients in Florida. But a Medicare fix has to be put in place for the future."

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# NATIONAL TRANSPLANT STATISTICS

The Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients released updated statistical information regarding transplant outcomes on January 10, 2006. The information shared below reflects national averages for adult patients receiving single-organ transplants during the 2005 calendar year.

<i>Kidney</i>	
1 year graft survival .....	91.7
3 year graft survival .....	81.9
1 year patient survival .....	95.9
3 year patient survival .....	90.2
<i>Liver</i>	
1 year graft survival .....	82.1
3 year graft survival .....	72.5
1 year patient survival .....	86.4
3 year patient survival .....	78.4
<i>Heart</i>	
1 year graft survival .....	86.7
3 year graft survival .....	78.8
1 year patient survival .....	87.5
3 year patient survival .....	79.3
<i>Pancreas</i>	
1 year graft survival .....	78.2
3 year graft survival .....	63.9
1 year patient survival .....	95.8
3 year patient survival .....	90.5
<i>Lung</i>	
1 year graft survival .....	82.2
3 year graft survival .....	61.7
1 year patient survival .....	83.6
3 year patient survival .....	75.0

## LIFELINK WELCOMES NEW MEDICAL STAFF

LifeLink HealthCare Institute is pleased to announce Dr. Guillermo B. Cintron, Jr., will join the medical staff in July, 2006. Dr. Cintron will serve as non-invasive clinical transplant cardiologist. In addition to training over 80 cardiologists and several hundred interns, Dr. Cintron possesses a seasoned history at the University of South Florida College of Medicine and served as Chief of Cardiology Section at Tampa Veterans Administration Hospital. Additionally, the Institute recently welcomed Nancy Simpson, RN, and Susan Dryjanski, RN, to the Kidney/Pancreas Transplant Coordinator team. Nancy previously served as Clinical Manager for a dialysis unit. Susan worked as a Nurse Traveler, gaining extensive ICU experience to prepare for her role at the Institute.

## LIVING DONOR CORNER: PROGRAMS AROUND THE WORLD

Last year in Germany, less than 20% of the country's kidney transplants involved living donors. The country implements strict guidelines, in many cases, limiting potential donors to first degree relatives. Although spouses may apply for consideration, no provision is currently made for close family friends to donate.

Transplant centers in the United Kingdom also maintain stringent regulations, resulting in almost half the number of living donor surgeries performed there versus the United States' numbers.

According to Dr. John Scoble of Guy's Hospital in London, the US often has less restrictive health requirements for both potential donors and recipients than the UK. Additionally, in 2005 Dr. Scoble noted in the Oxford Journals, "Living donor transplantation in the USA is not geographically constrained." By virtue of America's hotel industry, he explained, recipients and donors can travel to far-away centers and have a place nearby to recuperate and still receive appropriate follow-up care. Finally, UK surgeons haven't begun to utilize the laparoscopic method anywhere near as frequently as in the US, which might make the option of living donation less attractive to potential UK donors.

At present, the United States ranks second worldwide in living kidney transplant volume. Programs vary from center to center but many -- like LifeLink HealthCare Institute -- have implemented advocacy programs for living donors to address the emotional and physical needs of donors throughout the process.

In 2005, the British Medical Journal reported Norway as the world leader for number of living donor kidney transplants performed. Throughout the country, physicians may gain permission from patients to approach potential donors on their behalf. Many European centers are studying the Norwegian model to increase living donation in their countries.

## TREE OF LIFE UNVEILING HONORS THOSE WHO GAVE

On April 5, during the first week of National Donate Life Month, a group of approximately 50 gathered at the LifeLink HealthCare Institute to pay tribute to the most generous individuals in our community. The names of those individuals have been emblazoned in silver across the frosted walls of the clinic waiting area, providing a visual remembrance of LifeLink organ and tissue donors.



DONOR MOTHER KARYN WASHINGTON, LEFT, JOINS JEAN DAVIS, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF LIFELINK FOUNDATION, TO CUT THE RIBBON ON THE TREE OF LIFE MONUMENT

Dennis Heinrichs, President of LifeLink Foundation, gave special thanks to selfless donor families, noting their ability to “look past grief, exhaustion and heartache to a brighter future for mankind.” He continued, “Today we honor those who made years of enjoyment possible for recipient families -- years which wouldn’t have taken place without the Gift of Life. We’re continuously amazed by their generosity and strength.”

Heinrichs welcomed donor mother Karyn

Washington, who spoke with loving eloquence about her son, Boss. Transplant recipient Hope Senkeleski recalled her first year of marriage, when her health began failing and she learned she’d need a new heart.

The Tree of Life monument will be updated annually, to reflect the names of the previous year’s living and deceased donors.

“Donation can be one of the most rewarding yet difficult decisions to make,” said Candace Skelton, Clinical Coordinator for the Living Donor Program. “I always tell living donors they’ve helped two recipients - their loved one and a stranger who will never know them. Because of each living donor surgery, one more deceased donor organ goes to another person in need.”

Since the opaque panels were erected in the clinic, countless patients, family members and friends have taken time to view the long list of names. In those moments of reflection is the fulfilled purpose of the Tree of Life -- silent acknowledgement of inspiring altruism and lives that have been changed or saved as a result.

### AMERICAN LIVER FOUNDATION RECOGNIZES DR. ANGEL ALSINA



DR. ALSINA JOINED THE LIFELINK HEALTHCARE INSTITUTE IN 1996 AND SERVES AS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR THE LIVER PROGRAM

The Gulf Coast Chapter of the American Liver Foundation celebrated their annual “Salute to Excellence” on May 6, recognizing Dr. Angel Alsina for his outstanding contributions to the medical community and dedication to patients with liver disease. The evening included a silent auction fundraiser, dinner and dancing at the Hyatt Regency in Tampa.

Numerous patients of Dr. Alsina’s were in attendance and rose to their feet in applause upon acceptance of his award.

“I am very honored that the patients, who are so active in this chapter of the Foundation, think highly of me,” said Dr. Alsina. “And I’m pleased to be part of this organization.”

The American Liver Foundation is dedicated “to preventing, treating and curing hepatitis and other liver diseases through research, education and advocacy on behalf of those affected by or at risk of liver disease,” according to their mission statement. The Gulf Coast Chapter serves Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Orange, Sarasota and Manatee counties.

In addition to providing expert medical care to liver patients in these areas, Dr. Alsina also leads a transplant clinic in conjunction with the University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine, in San Juan.

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