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A NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

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A Kidney Transplant without Transfusion

By Lachyel Vaughn

Transplant
Transfusion
Alternatives

When I first started dialysis in 2003, I wasn't aware of transplant as a treatment option. Through the years I learned about transplant by reading a lot of material at my dialysis center, but, as a Jehovah Witness, we have no blood transfusions, and I didn't know how I could have a



Lachyel Vaughn, PAC Chair, Nassau County

My life has been by no means traditional.

My Faith & Loyalty

I know that Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" has empowered my life and guided me to be where I am today. As a Jehovah Witness, I follow the words of the bible in all things I do. This affected my treatment for ESRD, when I started dialysis in 2003. I attend Kingdom Hall on Long Island in New York. For the past 11 years, has been my responsibility to stay healthy and engaged through out dialysis and transplant and meet my spiritual requirements.

My Philosophy

Personally, I felt that if I did not follow Jehovah's word, I would displease him. After much thought and prayer about blood transfusions and transplant, I decided to seek a Transplant Center that would honor my beliefs.

My Truth

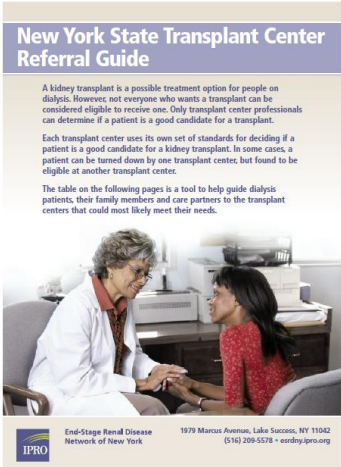
Through all my medical issues, kidney failure, dialysis and transplant, my faith has been my truth. My husband and my health care teams stand by me in this journey and I am a happy PAC Chair for Nassau County, so that I can support and encourage my peers through education, advocacy and positive communication.

transplant with no blood transfusions.

Being an ordained minister, I could not just say "This is it". I studied the bible and asked a lot of questions at Kingdom Hall. I discussed transplant with my husband, and after a lot of thought and prayer, I started calling local transplant centers to see if they did bloodless kidney transplants.

The second hospital that I called told me that they did, and I met with them to be put on the UNOS transplant waiting list. They were surprised that I had already researched transplant and had many of the medical tests that were needed to be listed for a deceased donor transplant. My dialysis center health care team and all of my other health care teams (Primary Care Physician, Cardiologist, Dentist, GI Doctor and my Gynecologist) helped me navigate the process, and because we were so well prepared, I was placed on the wait list pretty quickly.

A few years later, after I came home from my service meeting, I received the call. There was a kidney waiting for me. After nine years on dialysis, I received my kidney transplant in January, 2012.



You can find a list of NY State transplant facilities on the Network's website:

<http://esrdny.ipro.org/sample-page/community-information-publications-and-resources/> or you can call the Network to have them send you a copy. I am also available to speak with you about dialysis and transplant as a Jehovah Witness. You can contact the Network and they will put us in touch.

References:

From the University of Wisconsin¹:

Jehovah Witnesses do not accept blood transfusions for religious reasons. They believe organ donation and transplant is a matter of individual decision.

Jehovah Witnesses are often assumed to be opposed to organ donation and transplant because of their belief against blood transfusion. However, this merely means that all blood must be removed from the organs and tissues before being transplanted. At the time of transplant evaluation and prior to surgery, the physician will discuss possible risks during surgery which might merit blood transfusion or use of blood products. For example, a high level of blood loss might cause providers to recommend blood transfusion. The patient may still receive a transplant if they are willing to accept the possible risks associated with refusing blood transfusion or blood products.

From JW.ORG²

The conscience of some Witnesses permits them to accept organ transplants if done without blood. A report of 13 kidney transplants concluded: "The overall results suggest that renal transplantation can be safely and efficaciously applied to most Jehovah Witnesses." (*Transplantation*, June 1988) Likewise, refusal of blood has not stood in the way even of successful heart transplants.

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These PAC Chairpersons oversee the activities of the PAC Representatives in local facilities. PAC Chairs are happy to come out (schedule permitting) to Patient Meetings as guest speakers. If you would like a PAC Chairperson to be a guest speaker, please contact the Network's Community Outreach Coordinator at least one month before the meeting to allow for scheduling: PAC Coordinator at (516) 209-5578 or info@nw2.esrd.net.

¹ <http://www.uwhealth.org/transplant/kidney-transplant-frequently-asked-questions/10573>

² <http://www.jw.org/en/publications/books/blood/quality-alternatives-to-transfusion/>