

March 27, 2020

Dear Transplant Candidate:

The Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Program at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) New Brunswick continues to carefully monitor the rapidly growing number of COVID-19 virus-infected patients within the state of New Jersey. In our region, infections from coronavirus are now widespread and severe. Therefore, RWJUH has temporarily suspended all kidney and pancreas transplants. We will continue to monitor this pandemic and will resume transplant once this crisis has sufficiently diminished and it is safe to transplant again.

Please make note of the following changes and how they may impact you:

1. Effective March 27, 2020, the Kidney and Pancreas waitlist at RWJUH was made temporarily inactive

All patients on our waiting list will remain registered on the waiting list and accrue wait time for an organ. However, patients will **NOT** receive offers for transplant during the temporary inactive time frame. We will evaluate this situation weekly; we anticipate this will be in effect until May 1, 2020.

2. Waitlist patients needing re-evaluations

We will no longer have on-site, in-person appointments for patients who need a re-evaluation. We will be offering “Telemedicine” video based visit with one of our doctors. In some cases, we can also do a regular telephone appointment. To schedule a video or telephone appointment, please call us at 732-253-3699.

3. Referrals and patients wishing to start the evaluation for transplant listing

We will no longer have on-site, in-person appointments for patients who wish to start the evaluation for transplant listing or living donation.

- Referral forms can be filled out online at: njtransplant.org for both recipients and living donors.
- Patients can call us at 732-253-3699, to give us their contact information and we will offer “Telemedicine” video visits for these patients when possible.

Please note if you have already started your evaluation with us, you may continue the process of evaluation for candidacy on the waiting list for a kidney transplant at RWJUH. However, you are not eligible to be listed through this program while it is inactive.

You should know that if you are in the evaluation phase or on our waiting list, then you have the right to transfer to another transplant center. Please note, transferring may be difficult right now, due to similar changes occurring in many transplant centers throughout our area. You should understand that prior to being registered as an active candidate at any other transplant program; the accepting transplant program will complete an evaluation to determine your suitability for transplantation at that center. Should you choose to transfer to another transplant program, we can assist you.

You should also know that most patients won't lose "time on the list" due to a delay in their evaluation. Patients already on dialysis are prioritized on the waiting list according to their dialysis start date, not when the transplant center lists them. Therefore, if you are on dialysis but not yet on the waiting list, then a delay of your evaluation will probably not delay your transplant.

I want to reassure you that these changes at RWJUH are temporary and for your safety. When the current clinical situation improves and the risks are sufficiently diminished, we will start to do kidney and pancreas transplants again.

If you have questions, please contact your Transplant Coordinator directly. Thank you for choosing RWJUH and please stay safe.

Sincerely,

Ronald Pelletier, MD
Program Director, Kidney Pancreas Transplant Division
Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital