March 24, 2020

Dear Transplant Candidate:

The Renal and Pancreas Transplant Division at Saint Barnabas Medical Center is closely watching the COVID-19 pandemic. In our region, infections from the novel coronavirus are now widespread and severe. Therefore, Saint Barnabas will temporarily stop doing kidney transplants and pancreas transplants. When it is safe, we will start to do transplants again.

1. **Starting today, patients who are on the active waiting list at Saint Barnabas Medical Center will be made temporarily inactive.** For now, patients on the waiting list will NOT receive offers for transplants. We will evaluate this situation each week. We expect this stoppage will continue until May 1, 2020.

2. **We will no longer have on-site, in-person appointments for patients who need a re-evaluation.** Re-evaluations are for patients whom we have already seen and who might already be on the waiting list. Instead, these patients can have a video “Telemedicine” 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 973-322-5938.

3. **We will no longer have on-site, in-person appointments for patients who wish to start the evaluation for transplant.** These patients can call us at 973-322-5938 to give us their contact information. We will try to schedule a visit as soon as the situation permits. It is possible that we might start doing video “Telemedicine” visits for these patients. Instead of calling, patients can fill out the referral form online at: [www.rwjbh.org/kidneytransplantreferralform](http://www.rwjbh.org/kidneytransplantreferralform).
You should know that if you are on our waiting list, then you have the right to transfer to another transplant center. Of note, transferring may be hard right now, because many centers in the area have also stopped doing kidney transplants.

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 Saint Barnabas are temporary and for your safety.* When the medical situation is better, then we will start to do kidney and pancreas transplants again.

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

Sincerely,

Francis L. Weng, MD, MSCE
Chief, Transplant Division
Saint Barnabas Medical Center