Hospital Performs 1,000th Liver Transplant

(PRNewswire) In the Midwest Transplant Network service area, no other hospital has transplanted more organs than The University of Kansas Hospital. Recently, Brenda Higgins of Kansas City was the hospital's 1,000th liver transplant patient.

The liver transplant program has attracted patients to Kansas City from as far away as California and New York. In fact, Ellerbusch's mother, who lives in Los Angeles, found The University of Kansas Hospital through a friend's research on its short wait times and strong outcomes. The hospital's liver transplant accomplishments include:

- Patient outcomes, as measured by one-year survival rates, greater than the national average.
- Waiting times significantly lower than other centers, with the hospital's current wait time of 3.9 months, versus seven months regionally and 11.1 months nationally.

One liver transplant patient's wife, after an exhaustive search for transplant hospitals around the country, recently released a book chronicling their journey from their home in New York City to finding a hospital in Kansas City with faster wait times to complete the lifesaving procedure. The book - *Still Livin: The True Story of How One Couple Defied All Odds and Found the Gift of Life* - was written by Barbara Zitwer, with her husband, Gil Alicea, who decided to donate half the proceeds from the sale of the book toward The University of Kansas Hospital's transplant program.

The liver transplant program began at The University of Kansas Hospital in 1990. Timothy Schmitt, MD, director of the hospital's transplant program, gives much credit for the growth to the Midwest Transplant Network and the giving nature of people in the Midwest. "MTN has educated the public in terms of organ donation and has worked with donor families with grace and understanding," said Dr. Schmitt. "The people of the Midwest seem to understand that the loss of a loved one can also mean a new life for many people on organ waiting lists."

The University of Kansas Hospital is a leader in solid organ transplantation and is one of the Midwest region's most successful liver, kidney, and pancreas transplant programs. In addition to the 1,000th liver transplant since the program began in 1990, the hospital's first kidney transplant was performed in 1969 and since then, the center has performed more than 1,900 kidney transplants and nearly 150 pancreas transplants.

The hospital recently announced plans to establish a heart transplant program in an effort to offer the continuum of care to all heart patients and to better align with its mission for establishing a comprehensive center in solid organ transplantation of all major organ groups.

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