



Veterans Health Administration Adds MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute to its National Solid Organ Transplant Network

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Veterans in need of liver and/or kidney transplant to benefit from expertise of region's leading transplant program

Washington, DC – Veterans across the country who are in need of a life-saving liver or kidney transplant can now receive these procedures at one of the top ten transplant centers in the nation, MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute (MGTI), in partnership with the Washington DC VA Medical Center. The MedStar Health Program is now part of the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Solid Organ Transplant Network, expanding access to life-saving care at one of the most experienced transplant programs in the country. The VHA National Transplant Program has offered solid organ transplant services including liver, kidney, heart, lung, kidney/pancreas and heart/lung since 1962.

The new DC VA Medical Center partnership with MGTI establishes one of only five VHA liver transplant centers in the country to offer both liver and kidney transplant. Solid organ transplant surgery may be an option for Veterans experiencing end-stage liver disease or kidney failure resulting from a variety of conditions for which transplant is the only available option for treatment and long-term survival. The collaborative program allows Veterans to undergo the transplant procedure at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital while receiving much of their pre- and post-operative care with their VA health team.

The transplant program is a creation and collaboration of liver and kidney specialists from both organizations.

According to DC VA Medical Center Director Michael S. Heimall, FACHE, "Approval of the new DC VA Transplant Center demonstrates the VA's commitment to establish and broaden medical affiliations which expand quality services and provide life-changing care for Veterans when and where they need it."

The DC VA Medical Center-MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute partnership is designed to provide leading-edge consultative services, treatment, and surgical intervention to eligible Veterans currently enrolled for VA care who have a broad spectrum of conditions leading to a need for transplant. By broadening the medical center's partnership with MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute, care is open to Veterans living anywhere in the U.S.

“We are proud to provide life-saving liver and kidney services to our country’s veterans who need this specialized and complex care,” said Michael Sachtleben, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Washington Region, MedStar Health. “Our veterans will benefit from our 55 years of transplant experience, which has resulted in unmatched expertise, world-class compassionate care, and life-changing outcomes.”

Charles Faselis, MD, Chief of Staff at the DC VA Medical Center says, “The partnership allows the multidisciplinary transplant team to carefully coordinate and manage quality care for Veterans while the highly skilled experts at the MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute perform the life-saving procedures utilizing the latest surgical techniques and technologies.”

“Patients with organ failure are among the most vulnerable populations, so life-saving transplants are critical. Through this partnership, MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute is proud to care for our veterans,” said Thomas Fishbein, MD, executive director of the MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute. “Our team stands ready to provide the region’s veterans with timely, expert transplant care locally so that they do not have to travel outside the area.”



Atoosa Rabiee, MD, Chief of Transplant Services at the DC VA Medical Center, oversees the VA team and program operations which include coordinating consultation for patients with advancing liver failure, collaborating during the transplant procedure and arranging post-operative care. Care coordination may include a comfortable stay at the Fisher House for eligible Veterans and their family members. Dr. Rabiee recognizes the MedStar Georgetown partnership as “a unique opportunity to utilize local collaborations to deliver safe, quality care to Veterans while keeping them close to their family and community.”

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Washington DC VA Medical Center, a tertiary care, complexity level 1B hospital, offering comprehensive health care to eligible Veterans. The medical center’s health care teams are highly experienced and guided by the specific needs of Veterans, their families and caregivers. Providing comprehensive primary and specialty care in medicine, surgery, neurology and psychiatry, the facility has 164 acute care beds, 30 psychosocial residential rehabilitation treatment beds, and an adjacent 120-bed Community Living Center which offers a full-spectrum of extended care services. DC VA Medical Center is a clinical study site for functional-MRI and is the Polytrauma Network site, supporting Veterans with traumatic brain injury and post traumatic stress.

MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute, a systemwide program that is part of MedStar Health, is a multi-organ transplant program performing liver and kidney, pancreas and small bowel transplant. It is a leader within all these specialized groups, performs large numbers of living donor transplants, and operates the second largest paired kidney exchange program (through the National Kidney Registry) in the country. Liver transplant program outcome data are superior to any in the region. MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, the base of operations for transplant surgery, is a large, not-for-profit, tertiary-care teaching hospital located in Northwest Washington, D.C. Founded in the Jesuit principle of cura personalis, caring for the whole person, MedStar Georgetown is committed to offering a variety of innovative diagnostic and treatment options in a trusting and compassionate environment.