

04-25 Policy Matters

Subject: Celebrating National Donate Life Month

Preheader: Here, Policy Matters. Learn the latest from UPMC's Government Relations team.



National Donate Life Month is observed each April to raise awareness about donation, encourage Americans to register as organ, eye, and tissue donors, and honor those who have saved lives through the gift of donation.

UPMC Transplant Services has been a national leader in organ transplantation since 1981. UPMC has performed over 20,000 lifesaving organ transplants, including liver, kidney, heart, lung, and multi-organ procedures.

As a pioneer in solid organ transplantation, UPMC is home to world-renowned experts and offers innovative living-donor programs that help more patients receive the gift of life.

This edition of *Policy Matters* highlights the stories and transplant news across the UPMC footprint.



UPMC HEALTHBEAT

Donate Life: The Importance of Organ Donation

Many efforts are made to encourage organ donor registration and living organ donation. However, policy matters when it comes to increasing access to transplantation for patients on the transplant waiting list. Federal and state elected officials play an important role in considering and passing legislation that supports organ donation.

[Learn more](#)



UPMC Celebrates National Donate Life Month

All UPMC hospitals commemorated National Donate Life Month with flag-raising ceremonies, including [UPMC Harrisburg](#), [UPMC Washington](#), [UPMC Williamsport](#), and more. [UPMC Hamot](#) assisted in lighting up the Bicentennial Tower in Erie, Pa., in blue and green to honor Donate Life Month and celebrated in a ceremony with [CORE](#).



Batman, Superman, Spider-Man, and Captain America dropped by UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh to help clean the hospital's windows and bring joy to our patients. They also wore Donate Life capes in support of Donate Life Month!

UPMC

Tissue and Organ Donation Awareness

Hear from recent transplant patients and one patient still on the transplant waiting list discuss the importance of organ donation.

[Watch now](#)



Transplantation Across the UPMC Footprint

LINKS IN THE CHAIN OF GENEROSITY — Amit Tevar, MD, surgical director, Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Program, Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute, calls transplant surgery "the best job in the world." Dr. Tevar is inspired daily by donors' selfless acts.

During National Donate Life Month, UPMC honors deceased and living donors whose generosity can save or transform lives. Dr. Tevar highlights the ripple effect of living donation, where one act can inspire many. He hopes sharing these stories will encourage others to consider becoming donors.

[Learn more.](#)

SURGEONS PERFORM UPMC'S FIRST BLOODLESS HEART, KIDNEY TRANSPLANT

TRANSPLANT — Clinicians performed a heart and kidney transplant without the use of blood products for the first time at UPMC Presbyterian. The patient is a Jehovah's Witness who, for religious reasons, does not accept blood products. This may be the first time a heart-kidney transplant has been performed in a patient who could not accept a blood transfusion.

[Learn more.](#)

UPMC CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL LEADING THE WAY IN PEDIATRIC LIVER AND KIDNEY TRANSPLANTATION — The Hillman Center for Pediatric Transplantation at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh continues to establish itself as a national leader in pediatric transplantation, as evidenced by the latest outcomes reported by the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients. The program's commitment to excellence, innovative practices, and patient-centered care has resulted in groundbreaking survival rates and long-term success stories for children across the United States and beyond. [Learn more.](#)

UPMC HARRISBURG PERFORMS 1,500TH KIDNEY TRANSPLANT — In July 2024, the kidney transplant team at UPMC Harrisburg celebrated a milestone of 1,500 transplants since the program's inception in 2000. [Learn more.](#)

UPMC EXPANDING HEART TRANSPLANT EVALUATION IN HARRISBURG — Evaluations for heart transplants have become more accessible for patients in central Pennsylvania. With the opening of a pretransplant evaluation clinic at UPMC Harrisburg, patients with advanced heart failure can access pretransplant testing close to home. [Learn more.](#)

UPMC REPORTED AS NATIONAL LEADER IN HEART TRANSPLANT BY SRTR — According to the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR), the UPMC Heart Transplant Program is a top transplant program in two distinct outcome categories. UPMC is the national leader in the 90-day survival rate following heart transplantation. We are among the top nationally for patient survival rates at 30 days and one year after transplant. [Learn more.](#)

ATRIUM HEALTH LEVINE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL PARTNERS WITH UPMC CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL TO EXPAND PEDIATRIC LIVER TRANSPLANT PROGRAM IN NORTH CAROLINA — To provide the best care possible and the highest chance for a successful liver transplant for families in North Carolina, Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital has partnered with UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh to expand its pediatric liver transplant program. [Learn more.](#)

UPMC ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH INTERLINK COE NETWORKS & PROGRAMS — UPMC is part of a partnership with INTERLINK COE Networks & Programs as an addition to its solid organ transplant network.

INTERLINK COE is an outcome-based transplantation program and has established affiliations with top-tier facilities nationwide, covering both solid organ and blood/marrow transplants. It offers payors a discounted rate, providing access to their members requiring these specialized services.

This partnership includes the adult transplant programs at UPMC Presbyterian, pediatric transplant programs at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, and kidney transplantation at UPMC Harrisburg. [Learn more](#).

200TH LIVING-DONOR LIVER TRANSPLANT PERFORMED AT UPMC CHILDREN'S — In April 2024, the liver transplant team at the Hillman Center for Pediatric Transplantation at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh performed the center's 200th living-donor liver transplant. [Learn more](#).



UPMC in the News

- [**A Match Made in Heaven**](#)
- [**Woman Says Donating One of Her Kidneys to Her Husband Gave Him the Gift of Life**](#)
- [**Colorado Woman Donates Kidney to Save Pennsylvania Man 35 Years After They Went to Prom Together**](#)
- [**Pittsburgh Man Part of Medical Trial That Could Change Federal Law on Organ Transplants**](#)



Highlights from UPMC Health Plan

UPMC Health Plan focuses on improving the health of our members. Keep up to date with news focused on community impact.

- Sam Peasah, PhD, director, Value-Based Pharmacy Initiatives, UPMC Center for High-Value Health Care, was interviewed at the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP) conference about findings from a study on the cost impact of achieving 80% adherence to newer antidiabetic agents. [Learn more](#).
- In an interview with *Pharmacy Times*®, Sarah Nelson, PharmD, clinical pharmacist, UPMC Health Plan, discusses her role as a pharmacist when helping members manage and treat their chronic kidney disease. [Learn more](#).
- Ethisphere again recognized UPMC as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies. Ethisphere is a global leader in defining and advancing the standards of ethical business practices. [Learn more](#).
- UPMC Health Plan recently won seven Stevie Awards for 2025. The Stevie® Awards for Sales & Customer Service are the world's top honors for customer service, contact center, business development, and sales professionals.

More than 2,100 nominations from organizations of all sizes and in virtually every industry were considered in this year's competition. The businesses represent 45 nations and territories.

In addition to being honored with the Customer Service Award of the Year, UPMC Health Plan received Gold Stevie Awards in the following categories:

- Customer Service Department of the Year.
- Customer Service Employer of the Year.
- Enrollment and COB for Back-Office Customer Service Team of the Year.

UPMC Health Plan earned Silver Stevie Awards in the following categories:

- Best Use of Customer Insight.
- Contact Center of the Year (Over 100 Seats).
- Customer Service Transformation.

Stay Informed

UPMC's Government Relations Team is committed to delivering relevant and timely news on the latest health care trends, medical research, and clinical developments as they relate to public health issues.

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