

PRESS RELEASE

National Kidney Registry Initiates Donor Blood Cryo-Preservation

First National Program to Leverage Cryo-Preservation Technology

(Babylon, NY – December 2, 2014) - The National Kidney Registry announced the successful completion of the first cryo cross match today. This marks the launch of a cryo-preservation initiative that will allow NKR member centers to draw blood from potential donors once, freeze the blood cells and ship out many frozen vials of the donor's blood. This innovative new process will expedite the search for compatible donors for sensitized patients in need of a kidney transplant. This new process will speed up cross match testing and make it more convenient for donors to participate in paired exchange because it will prevent donors from having to undergo multiple blood draws prior to a successful match. It will also help highly sensitized patients find a match by allowing centers to do more exploratory cross matches for their hardest to match patients.

The cryo-preservation pilot program was initiated in partnership with the laboratories from eight NKR member centers including Johns Hopkins, UCLA, New York Presbyterian Weill-Cornell, Virginia Commonwealth University, Henrico's Doctors Hospital, Penn-Hershey Hospital, University of Pittsburgh, and Sharp Memorial Hospital.

The first cryo cross match was completed between Johns Hopkins Hospital and the UCLA Medical Center. Expanding on the importance of the program, the NKR cryo-preservation project leader from Hopkins, Annette Jackson, PhD, said, "It can be frustrating and time consuming for donors who repeatedly take time out of their busy schedules to provide blood for cross matching. Cryo-preservation gives us an opportunity to eliminate that by taking one blood draw that can be frozen and used for many subsequent cross matches."

J. Michael Cecka, PhD, Chair of NKR's Histocompatibility Committee and Director, Clinical Research in the UCLA Immunogenetics Center added, "In addition to the convenience for donors, with cryo-preserved cells on hand, we will be able to run more exploratory cross matches and get the results much faster. We expect this to help more highly sensitized patients get transplanted. We look forward to broader participation in the cryo program as centers become more comfortable with the technology and this new process."

Speaking to the broader implications of the cryo-preservation programs, Gareth Hil, Founder and CEO of the NKR said, "Approximately 90% of the patients that have enrolled in the NKR have been transplanted. We remain laser focused on the remaining 10% of patients in our system that are highly sensitized and have not been transplanted. We expect this innovative cryo-preservation technology to facilitate more transplants for these hardest to match patients."

About the National Kidney Registry

The National Kidney Registry (www.kidneyregistry.org) is a nonprofit organization with the mission to save and improve the lives of people facing kidney failure by increasing the quality, speed, and number of living donor transplants.