

PRESS RELEASE

First Valentine's Day Donor Chain

Kidney Transplant Chain Initiated at New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell

(New York, NY – February 20, 2008) - On Valentine's Day, one of the nation's first three-way living-donor kidney transplant chains was initiated by New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center and its medical partner The Rogosin Institute. The innovative approach — a NEAD (never-ending altruistic donor) chain — may dramatically improve the opportunity for patients in need of kidney transplants to find a compatible donor and potentially revolutionize the organ transplant process in the United States.

This life-saving chain began with the generosity of a California woman who donated her kidney to a stranger in New York City, resulting in life-saving kidney transplantations for three patients — and, going forward, potentially benefiting hundreds of the 74,000 kidney patients on the national transplantation waiting list.

In this remarkable arrangement, a family member of each recipient volunteered to donate his or her kidney to another patient in need. The first three successful transplants took place Thursday, Feb. 14, with future surgeries to follow.

All three kidney recipients met their previously anonymous donors for the first time today at a press conference held at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell.

"This approach could revolutionize the way we do living-donor transplants in this country, greatly reducing, even eliminating the organ shortage in this country and ultimately saving the lives of those in desperate need of a kidney," says Dr. Sandip Kapur, who led the transplantation surgeries. Dr. Kapur serves as chief of transplant surgery, director of kidney and pancreas transplant programs and associate attending surgeon at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell, and associate professor of surgery at Weill Cornell Medical College.

The recent surgeries involved six surgical transplant teams, including 40 clinicians, working simultaneously in six operating rooms. Along with Dr. Kapur, New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell physicians and surgeons participating in the kidney swap procedures included Drs. Joseph Del Pizzo (director of laparoscopic and robotic surgery for the Division of Urological Surgery and assistant professor of urology), Alfons Pomp (chief of the section of laparoscopy and bariatric surgery and the Leon C. Hirsch Professor of Surgery), Eduardo Perelstein (pediatric neurologist and associate professor of clinical pediatrics), David Leeser (assistant attending surgeon and assistant professor of surgery) and David Serur (medical director of The Rogosin Institute Transplant Center at New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell and associate professor of clinical medicine and medicine in clinical surgery).

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.