



UT Partnership with Methodist Leads to Record Number of Transplants

By the close of 2006, almost 200 patients had received a proverbial new lease on life through transplant surgery performed at Methodist University Hospital Transplant Institute. Last year, James D. Eason, MD, program director of the Transplant Institute and a professor of surgery at UT Health Science Center, marked a new record for number of transplants performed annually at the facility. Until last year, the highest number of transplants performed at the institute was 176 in 1998. On December 31, total transplants for 2006 were 198.

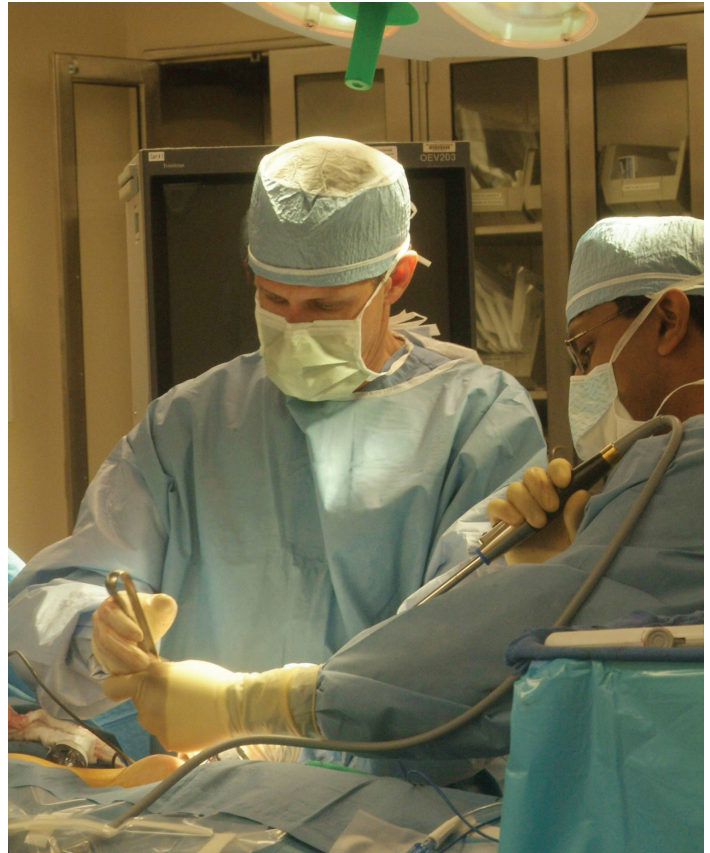
The Transplant Institute

The Transplant Institute, inside Methodist University Hospital (MUH), is a partnership program with the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. Methodist assumed management of UT Bowld Hospital and its transplant program in November 2002. Almost two years later, the UT Bowld Transplant Program moved to MUH, and the MUH Transplant Institute was formed. It is the only abdominal transplant program in the Mid-South, performing kidney, pancreas and liver transplants.

“Everyone played a significant role in making this moment a reality,” said Daniel Stanton, administrator, MUH Transplant Institute. “It’s an incredible milestone to reach, and particularly because we know that it represents the number of lives we were able to save...a record number of them.”

Stanton stressed that the staff’s hard work made all the difference in achieving such noteworthy results. “It’s been teamwork...one big team effort and it has worked out very well,” he said.

The MUH Transplant Institute team consists of three surgeons: Dr. Eason plus Nosratollah Nezaatgoo, MD, and Santiago Vera, MD, who also serve as an assistant professor and professor of surgery, respectively, at UTHSC. As the prototype institute developed by UTHSC and MUH, the surgeons naturally collaborate with a talented team of specialists, who have solid experience in their respective fields. The other transplant team members are: Maung Mya, MD, transplant nephrology; Satheesh Nair, MD and Jackie Fleckenstein, MD, transplant hepatology; and a group of four UT Medical Group anesthesiologists: Olivia Cabigao, MD; Eileen Liu, MD; Judith Ruiz, MD; and Rebecca Sledge, MD.



Dr. James Eason performs a liver transplant.

Why Transplants Have Increased

Stanton attributes the increase in transplants performed in 2006 to new protocols established since Dr. Eason joined the staff last April. “The new protocols allow us to utilize organs that we might not otherwise have been able to use,” he said. Stanton observed that before Dr. Eason became program director, the institute was quite conservative in its approach to matching recipients with suitable organs.

“Tennessee has a large number of donors that have been leaving the state because the transplant programs in Tennessee were not aggressive in using them,” Dr. Eason stated. “The goal is to make the UT Methodist Transplant Institute not only a top-notch provider of transplant care in the region. We want to make it a national destination for transplant care.”

Born in Memphis, Dr. Eason received his medical degree in 1987 from the UT School of Medicine in Memphis. He joined Methodist from Ochsner Clinic and Ochsner Foundation Hospital in New Or-

leans, where he was section head of Abdominal Organ Transplantation.

“There was a great team in place,” Dr. Eason said of the Transplant Institute. “I had the opportunity to come in and lead them in a new direction.”

Transplants *continued on Page 22*



Dr. Santiago Vera (left) and Dr. Atsushi Shimizu perform a kidney transplant.

Newest Transplant Surgeon at Methodist



Jason M. Vanatta, MD, joined Methodist University Hospital in July, becoming the fourth and newest faculty transplant surgeon.

Before relocating to Memphis, Dr. Vanatta was a fellow in multi-organ abdominal transplantation surgery at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif. He also served as a clinical instructor in general surgery for two years at Stanford.

Dr. Vanatta holds a bachelor's in chemistry with emphasis in molecular biology from the University of Pittsburgh, as well as a bachelor's in philosophy from Boston University. He attended the MCP Hahnemann University School of Medicine, part of Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, earning his MD with a pathway in surgery. Dr. Vanatta's postgraduate training includes work as an intern and resident in general surgery at Baylor College of Medicine in Waco, Texas.

Transplants *continued from Page 21*



From left to right: Nosratollah Nezakatgoo, MD; James Eason, MD; and Santiago Vera, MD

A Leader With Plans for Future Success

“I’m extremely proud of the work the Transplant Institute does,” said Cecelia Sawyer, CEO, Methodist University Hospital. “The program has always been a leader in its field. It was the sixth transplant program in the nation to perform a kidney transplant, and the third in the nation to introduce a liver transplant program. This transplant program has such an

impressive and rich history, and the best part is that it’s continuing to make history.”

Stanton projected that the institute could perform as many as 250 transplants each year. With more than 90,000 people across the nation currently waiting for organs, every transplant performed has significant impact.

All pictures are a courtesy of Methodist Healthcare and were taken by Methodist Photographer Joseph Martin.

Transplant Institute Highlights

- ◆ The Transplant Institute is a partnership program between UT Health Science Center and Methodist University Hospital.
- ◆ Methodist assumed management of the UT Bowld Transplant Program in 2002. Two years later, the institute moved inside Methodist, where it is currently located.
- ◆ A leader in the field for more than 30 years, the program offers hope to patients with conditions such as kidney failure, end-stage liver diseases such as cirrhosis, Hepatitis C and diabetes.
- ◆ In April 1970, the first kidney transplant was performed at UT Bowld Hospital, making it the sixth medical center in the nation to transplant a kidney. Since then, the program has performed more than 1,600 and has one of the most successful survival rates in the United States.
- ◆ In 1982, the institute introduced the third liver transplant program in the country; more than 400 liver transplants have been performed since that time.
- ◆ The institute is the only transplant program in the Mid-South, performing kidney, pancreas and liver transplants.
- ◆ In 2006, 198 transplants were performed at the institute.