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*If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?*

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## Johns Hopkins becomes first center in the U.S. to perform HIV-positive to HIV-positive organ transplants

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Johns Hopkins recently received approval from the United Network for Organ Sharing to be the first hospital in the U.S. to perform HIV-positive to HIV-positive organ transplants. The institution will be the first in the nation to do an HIV-positive to HIV-positive kidney transplant and the first in the world to execute an HIV-positive to HIV-positive liver transplant.

"This is an unbelievably exciting day for our hospital and our team, but more importantly for patients living with HIV and end-stage organ disease. For these individuals, this means a new chance at life," says Dorry L. Segev, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of surgery at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

This announcement brings to fruition the exhausting two-year effort Segev put into helping draft and push through the 2013 HOPE Act ? a bill signed by President Obama that made it possible for HIV-positive individuals to donate organs, and one of only 57 bills passed in 2013 by the most unproductive Congress in the history of the United States.

Approximately 122,000 people are on the transplant waiting list in the U.S. at any one time. Thousands die each year, many of whom may have lived had they gotten the organ they needed. Meanwhile, Segev estimates that each year, about 500 to 600 HIV-positive, would-be organ donors had organs that could have saved more than 1,000 people ? if only the medical community was allowed to use the organs for transplant.

The antiquated law, which the HOPE Act reversed, prevented doctors from using organs from HIV-positive donors, even if they were intended to be given to an HIV-positive patient desperately in need of the organ. Despite very positive outcomes in non-HIV transplants in HIV-positive recipients and proven results of HIV-positive to HIV-positive kidney transplants in South Africa, HIV-positive to HIV-positive transplant in the U.S. was not a possibility until now.

"Organ transplantation is actually even more important for patients with HIV, since they die on the waiting list even faster than their HIV-negative counterparts. We are very thankful to Congress, Obama and the entire transplant community for letting us use organs from HIV-positive patients to save lives, instead of throwing them away, as we had to do for so many years," says Segev.

The first approved HIV-positive to HIV-positive transplant could take place as soon as a suitable organ should become available and a recipient is successfully identified and prepared.

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Source:

Johns Hopkins Medicine

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