

Quality Insights Renal Network

Me, too! Campaign

Increasing Transplant Referral Campaign for Patients \geq 65 Years Old

Patient-to-Patient Story

The year was 2008 and I was working in a steel plant as a plant maintenance repairman. While getting a physical to return to work after a health problem, the nurse found that I was passing protein in my urine, and advised me to see my primary care provider (PCP) for further evaluation. So as anybody would do, I went and saw my PCP and explained what was going on. He advised me to see a Nephrologist. So I went and had some tests done and went back for the results. It was then I was told that my kidneys were failing. I was informed that the next step was to have a biopsy of both kidneys.



The results came back a week later with a diagnosis of Focal Segmental Glomerulosclerosis disease (FSGS). I was scared. I was an EMT at one time and thought this was going to be my end. Just when I thought things could not get any worse, they did. My wife had been to her doctor's office and called me to come home right away. She sounded very distraught about something so I asked her what it was and she told me she had cancer. After talking with my kidney doctor about my condition, I felt I was not too bad yet. My wife of 45 years came first. So off we went to my wife's testing, chemo and surgery to the final total clearance. She was free of cancer.

Now we concentrated on my kidney problem (FSGS). By this time, it was very hard to go and work in an industrial plant. During one of my visits to the nephrologist he said that I should really consider getting on a transplant list. But going through life with so many medical problems such as high cholesterol, heart stents (5) and many others, I said enough was enough. Let's just say, my Nephrologist and I got into a very heated debate as to why I did not want to go through with being referred for transplant. So for about an hour we went back and forth on the pros and cons of doing it. My wife and the nurses tried to get me to change my mind. With

all three against me, I knew it was not going to go the way I wanted, so I said let's get started with the testing or whatever was needed to be done.

Reluctantly, I took the first step and agreed to be referred. That first step led to the road of getting better and getting on a transplant waitlist in Pittsburgh, PA. The journey continued at the Starzel Transplant Clinic where I received education on all that would need to be done before I could be put on the waitlist. A set-back occurred on Mother's Day 2009. I thought I had a sprained back. I went to work as usual the next day, while at work, the pain persisted and I was taken by ambulance to the hospital. Well, it turned out to be a heart attack. I was transferred to Pittsburgh where I had a quadruple bypass done.

After that, I assumed I would not be considered a transplant candidate because I may be a high risk patient now. Surprisingly, after a lot more testing and blood work, I was put on the waitlist for a kidney transplant. My two sisters agreed to be tested to see if they would possibly be a kidney donor match for me. Surprise, Surprise! My second sister, Irene Mores, one of a set of triplets, turned out to be a match. When she called and told me we were a match I started to get all my things in life together and wait for the call from my transplant coordinator for the date of the operation.

August 20, 2012 at 7:30 AM was a day that changed my life. We got to the hospital at 5:00 AM and met everybody, then on to being prepared for the operation. This went well and took about five hours, then on to recovery. The next day I tried to get out of bed like I did after open heart surgery but found there were a lot more wires and tubes on me. After five days of listening and doing what was needed to be done, I was discharged to the Family House, a place for family or patients to stay while recovering, only a couple of blocks away from the hospital. After spending a week and a half there I was ready to go home.

Wow, it's been over a year and a half since my transplant. My lab levels are good and even my heart doctor says that everything is going much better now. Currently, I volunteer for the Western Pennsylvania Kidney Support Groups, where we try to spread the word on kidney disease and the resources that are available. The website is www.wpakidneysupport.org. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Now, since turning the young age of sixty-six, people asked me would I have the transplant again. MY ANSWER IS YES!!!

--Joseph A. Mores

Statement: To file a grievance, please contact Quality Insights Renal Network 4 at: Patient Toll Free Line: 1-800-548-9205, www.qirn4.org, 630 Freedom Business Center, Suite 116, King of Prussia, PA 19406.

June 2014