

September 19, 2012 | By Kim Edwards

UC San Diego Health System Transplant Program Receives Federal Certification

Recognized by Medicare as Heart-Lung Transplant “Center of Excellence”

UC San Diego’s Center for Transplantation has met or exceeded all of its necessary requirements for approval as a center of excellence under the Federal Medicare program. This approval – from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) – allows UC San Diego Health System to accept into its program potential cardiac transplant patients covered by Medicare.

“This will open our doors even wider to qualifying patients who deserve a second chance at life” said Jack Copeland, MD, surgical director, Heart Transplantation and Mechanical Assist Devices UC San Diego Health System.

Eric Adler, MD, medical director, Heart Transplantation and Mechanical Assist Devices, added that the health system now offers comprehensive Medicare-approved organ transplant and mechanical heart assist services including kidney, pancreas, liver, heart, lung transplant, Heartmate II and Total Artificial Heart mechanical assist devices.

“Heart and heart-lung transplantation is a vital part of our continuing commitment to providing comprehensive cardiothoracic care – all under one roof in San Diego’s only dedicated cardiovascular center,” said Stuart Jamieson, MB, chief of cardiothoracic surgery and director of cardiothoracic transplantation. “The team of thought leaders we have assembled in this area is second-to-none and brings California the level of expertise and care it deserves.”

The UC San Diego Health System heart transplant program began in 1989 under the direction of Jamieson, Distinguished Professor of Surgery at UC San Diego School of Medicine, who performed the hospital’s first heart transplant in 1990. The comprehensive program also offers one of the most sought after lung transplant programs on the West Coast. Both programs are based at UC San Diego Sulpizio Cardiovascular Center, the region’s first and only award-winning facility dedicated strictly to heart and lung care.

“This recent certification is not limited to the cardiothoracic transplant program,” explained Alexander Aussi, transplant services administrator, UC San Diego Health System. “Our mechanical heart assist device program will benefit significantly since Medicare patients will now qualify from mechanical heart assist device support as a bridge to transplantation.”

The facility’s mechanical heart assist device program was independently certified by The Joint Commission (TJC), an independent accreditation body which certifies health care organizations, in November 2011.

An updated list of CMS approved heart and heart/lung transplant programs is available at: <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Provider-Enrollment-and-Certification/CertificationandCompliance/downloads/ApprovedTransplantPrograms.pdf> (PDF)

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