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UC San Diego Heart Transplant Program Boasts Nation's Best Survival Rates

Cardiovascular Institute at UC San Diego Health Among Top Performing in U.S.

The heart transplant program at UC San Diego Health has demonstrated the best one-year survival rate for patients in the United States among health care providers with a volume of more than 50 heart transplants per year, according to the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR).

“At one year, 98.7 percent of our patients are alive and enjoying excellent health with their new hearts,” said Victor Pretorius, MBChB, surgical director of cardiac transplant and mechanical circulatory support at UC San Diego Health. “This superb outcome is clear evidence that the Cardiovascular Institute offers a top multidisciplinary team of experts who save lives, safely and reliably, through transplantation.”

The SRTR serves as a national source for objective organ transplantation information. SRTR data is largely collected directly by the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) from transplant programs, organ procurement organizations (OPOs), and histocompatibility laboratories. The most recent release of SRTR data represents January 2016 to June 2018.

“UC San Diego performs exceptionally high across all measurements including better waitlist survival, less time waiting for transplantation, and the impressive one-year survival rates,” said Eric Adler, MD, cardiologist and director of cardiac transplant and mechanical circulatory support.



The UC San Diego heart transplant team has achieved the best one-year survival rate for patients in the U.S. among providers with a volume of more than 50 heart transplants per year.

More than 67 percent of patients at UC San Diego Health are transplanted within three years, faster than the national average.

“Our patients have impressive survival on the waitlist for a multitude of reasons: we have outstanding physicians and allied health professionals, access to the best technology and excellent organ availability. But what makes us special is we are a team who is committed to doing exactly what we would do if the person walking into our clinic is family; that mindset makes all the difference,” said Adler.

“We attribute the one-year survival rates to an incredible group effort from highly skilled professionals,” said Pretorius who has performed more than 250 heart transplant surgeries. “Dedication and years of experience are vital in allowing us to progressively offer heart transplantation to more patients, even the ones with the most complex conditions. Internationally recognized research and clinical efforts in the field have made San Diego a destination for the most desperate heart failure patients.”

Pretorius also attributes the overall success of the program to phenomenal communication, coordination and teamwork.

“We have an incredible team who guides our patients and families through their entire transplant experience,” said Pretorius. “Every patient has a personal team of surgeons, cardiologists, nurses, physician assistants, infectious disease experts, social workers, dieticians, pharmacists, transplant coordinators, quality specialists, financial coordinators and support staff.”

The heart transplant program at Sulpizio Cardiovascular Center, part of the institute, is the largest in San Diego and the third largest in California, placing it among the nation’s top performing transplant centers. *U.S. News & World Report* ranks the cardiology and heart surgery programs at UC San Diego Health as among the best in the nation.

“Drs. Pretorius and Adler demonstrate a high level of continuous engagement that is needed to deliver a top-tier heart transplant program,” said Patty Maysent, CEO of UC San Diego Health. “The Cardiovascular Institute at UC San Diego Health embodies the best of academic



Victor Pretorius, MBChB, transplant surgeon and surgical director of cardiac transplant and mechanical circulatory support.

medicine. Its combination of novel research, teaching and clinical care is raising the bar for translational medicine that improves the lives of patients with visible results.”

The Cardiovascular Institute specializes in transplanting patients with the most challenging cases of heart disease. Its reputation is built upon a stellar faculty, peer-reviewed research, bridge-to-transplant technologies and clinical outcomes.



Pretorius attributes the overall success of the transplant program to the Institute's phenomenal communication, coordination and teamwork.

Multidisciplinary teams transplant high-risk hearts, including those with curable hepatitis C virus.

The institute also specializes in

treating complex conditions, such as congenital heart disease, cardiogenic shock, chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension and patients with left ventricle assist devices who need repeat surgeries. The institute's techniques and

treatments are setting new standards in vascular, cardiac and transplant care to the benefit of all patients.

According to Lifesharing, a regional nonprofit group that coordinates all organ donations in San Diego and Imperial counties, almost 3,800 people nationwide are on heart transplant waiting lists. In San Diego and Imperial Counties, 49 require a new heart. Of these 49, more than half have been waiting more than six months for a donated organ.



Eric Adler, MD, cardiologist and director of cardiac transplant and mechanical circulatory support.

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