Introducing the Highly Sensitized Patient (HSP) program

What is the HSP program?
The HSP program is the most recent addition to the Canadian Transplant Registry (CTR) and the first national deceased kidney donor organ sharing agreement in Canada. The HSP program provides kidney transplant opportunities for highly sensitized patients by giving provincial transplant programs access to a larger number of potential donors.

What is the Canadian Transplant Registry (CTR)?
The provincial and territorial Ministries of Health and provincial organ donation organizations (ODOs) and transplantation programs have developed a shared vision of how inter-provincial collaboration could better serve patients. So, with direction and funding from the provinces and in collaboration with the organ donation and transplantation community, Canadian Blood Services developed the CTR.

Through coordinated national organ sharing, the CTR provides patients from provincial transplantation programs and agencies with improved opportunities for an organ transplant. The CTR currently consists of three features: the Living Donor Paired Exchange, the National Organ Waitlist and now the new HSP program. The CTR includes kidney, heart, lung, liver, pancreas/islet, and small bowel patients from across the country.

Which patients will be part of the HSP program?
Patients with past exposures to foreign tissue through pregnancy, past transplants and blood transfusions have high levels of sensitizing antibodies. As a result, these patients become “highly sensitized” and are at a much higher risk of rejecting a kidney. This makes it very difficult to find a suitable kidney for transplantation. The HSP program will increase access to kidney transplants for this group of patients because they will have access to a larger deceased kidney donor pool.

Why is it being developed?
There is an ongoing and increasing need for Canadians to have better access to organ transplantation services. In particular, highly sensitized kidney patients comprise approximately 20% of provincial waitlists, but historically receive less than 1% of available donor organs. They are challenged to find a match, as they have access to only the limited number of donors in their local donation region. This prolongs their wait time for a transplant and may result in deterioration in some patient’s medical condition. By providing access to all donors across the country, this registry will increase the chances of finding kidney transplants for these hard-to-match patients.

How is it being implemented?
Provincial ODOs and transplant programs are working together to implement the HSP program. The HSP program began to accept donor data entry and donor organ allocation for highly sensitized kidney patients in the fall of 2013. The planned, staged implementation will roll out across Canada. All provincial ODOs and transplantation programs will be able to use the program once the implementation process is completed.

Is the HSP program operational in Saskatchewan?
Yes. Saskatchewan was one of the first provinces to implement the HSP registry. The was initiated on October 21, 2013. Currently there are approximately 15 Saskatchewan patients eligible to participate in the registry.

For more information please contact the Saskatchewan Transplant Program at 306-655-5054