

Health Headlines

For Immediate Release

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Elaine Smiley (L) of LiveOnNY, presented the Gold Recognition Award to members of the JJP Organ Donor Council. (L-R), Elaine Smiley, Dr. Sarah Garrison, Sylvia Barchue, Alex Wong, Sharyn Kreitzer, and Jessica Fitzpatrick

James J. Peters VA Medical Center Organ Donor Council Receives Special Recognition

Bronx, NY – On July 21, 2016 representatives of the US Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and LiveOnNY visited the James J. Peters VA Medical Center to present the Gold Recognition Award to members of the Organ Donor Council. The Gold Recognition Award – awarded to both public and private institutions - recognizes extraordinary achievements in the support of organ donor initiatives. Of the 995 hospitals and transplant centers participating in the campaign, only 147 received Gold status recognition. The JJP was one of only two VA Medical centers in the country to receive this prestigious award.

“I was honored to accept this award on behalf of the Organ Donor Council,” stated Dr. Sarah Garrison, Chief of Staff at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center. “The council and members of our Renal Transplant Program have succeeded in raising awareness of the benefits of organ donation. They are doing a fantastic job in support of our developing program and this recognition speaks to their many successes.”

The JJP Organ Donor Council is an interdisciplinary team, assembled in 2016. In its first year, the council has worked on programs and policies to raise the culture of awareness about organ donation throughout the medical center. Among their accomplishments, the team enrolled over 65 new organ donors during a hospital wide donor drive; facilitated several seminars on all aspects of organ donation and transplantation for staff and patients; created a very effective public relations campaign featuring two very special Veterans; one of whom has been the recipient of a kidney transplant, the other who is still waiting for a kidney. In the past 6 months JJP has identified 3 Veterans who were able to give the gift of tissue donation.

The efforts of JJP in raising awareness is especially important in New York, as the region ranks last in the number of donor registrations in the country. New Yorkers in need wait the longest for organ and tissue donations, due to the high demand and limited registrations. The JJP will be launching its own renal transplant program this Summer. It will be the first renal transplant program program in the Northeast, and the 7th in the nation within the VA Health Care System. Therefore the need to raise awareness about organ donation has become “personal” to our JJP community. No Veteran should have to wait years to undergo a kidney transplant. The James J. Peters VA Medical Center hopes to serve as a model for the other VA’s in our region, and beyond. Together, we can make a difference in organ donation.

For more information related to the James J. Peters VA Medical Center, please contact Jim Connell, Public Affairs Officer, at 718.584.9000, Ext. 6620.

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