
From: FAIR Foundation [mailto:fair@dc.rr.com]

Sent: Monday, December 15, 2008 12:14 PM

To: Carrie Peyton Dahlberg (cpeytondahlberg@sacbee.com) Staff Reporter, Sacramento Bee

Cc: Donald Hillebrand MD; Michelle Roberts, RN, BSN, CCRN, PHN, MBA: Director, Scripps Green TX Ctr.; Lorenzo Rossaro MD

Subject: UC Davis Medical Center to close liver transplant program

<http://www.sacbee.com/273/story/1470661.html>

Dear Carrie,

In your story regarding the very unfortunate closure of UC Davis's liver transplant program, you stated, "Livers are allocated based largely on how sick someone is, so changing to a different center shouldn't increase anyone's wait for an organ, doctors said."

The last half of that sentence is erroneous and I urge you to correct this in follow-up stories because lives will be saved if you do. Due to the way UNOS is structured, different organ procurement organizations and their corresponding geographic area transplant centers transplant sooner than others—years sooner. If a patient from UC Davis stays in Northern California or goes to the UCLA to Loma Linda corridor, they will experience a much longer wait for a liver, and perhaps die waiting, than if they go to San Diego (Scripps Green or UCSD have liver transplant programs there) or to many other states.

At this link from our website

http://fairfoundation.org/news_letter/2007/04dec/OPO_MELD_scores.htm you can view the MELD scores for different states and regions in 2006—it has not changed much since then. **MELD** is "Model for End Stage Liver Disease" and it is a computer formula based on blood test results that determines when a patient will get a liver—the patient with the highest score in that organ procurement area (OPO) gets the next liver. Note that in the Northern California OPO's and in the LA to Riverside OPO (OneLegacy) one must have a much higher MELD than in San Diego or in many other states to get a liver.

Should you want me to clarify this further, please phone me or you may phone Donald Hillebrand, MD, the Medical Director of Liver Transplant at Scripps Green at 858-405-8514, for further information and clarification. He also has served as a UNOS Councillor and has the latest facts.

You may also wish to view our 25-member Board of Directors of transplant surgeons, medical directors, including Dr. Rossaro, the Medical Director of Liver Transplant at UC Davis's program, Dr. Hillebrand and others here:

<http://www.fairfoundation.org/Board/board.htm>.

I sincerely hope you will consider making this news the headline of a new story so the UC Davis patients and other patients in Northern California can be alerted to the possibility of being transplanted much sooner in other geographic areas. Ironically, UC Davis was the one

place up north where patients could be transplanted by Dr. Rossaro sooner and now, sadly, that option has vanished for those patients.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Darling, DDS: [Past National Public Citizen of the Year \(NASW\)](#)
 President and CEO: [The FAIR Foundation](#), a national organization with thousands of members and supporters whose goal is

to reverse inequities in NIH research funding and to institute [new organ-donor policies](#) to reverse America's organ-donor crisis

Founder: [The FAIR Foundation Liver Disease & Transplant Support Group](#)

Author: [Coma Life](#), an autobiographical memoir of life "within" coma and survival over hepatitis C induced liver cancer, coma, 3

liver transplants, heart attack, diabetes & Muscular Dystrophy (Myasthenia Gravis)

Address: 78629 Bougainvillea Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92211 Ph: 760-200-2766

Disease	2009 NIH Research \$	Deaths Per Disease	\$ Per Patient Death	\$ Per Patient
COPD**	90 Million	126,128	\$ 714	\$ 7
Hepatitis C	107 Million	12,000	\$ 8,916	\$ 20
Cardiovascular Dis.	2.3 Billion	871,500	\$ 2,639	\$ 29
Hepatitis B	42 Million	5,000	\$ 8,400	\$ 34
Diabetes	1 Billion	74,817	\$13,365	\$ 39
Parkinson's Dis.	186 Million	19,547	\$ 9,516	\$ 124
Alzheimer's Dis.	644 Million	71,696	\$ 8,928	\$ 124
Prostate Cancer	344 Million	27,050	\$12,717	\$ 181
HIV/AIDS	2.9 Billion	14,016	\$ 206,906	\$ 2,774
All Cancers	5.5 Billion	559,650	\$ 9,888	\$ 3,830
Breast Cancer	716 Million	40,910	\$ 17,501	\$ 3,967
West Nile Virus	56 Million	121	\$ 462,809	\$ 15,564

** COPD = Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Statistics derived from the CDC & NIH facts. See: <http://www.fairfoundation.org/factslinks.htm>

NIH Orphan (rare) Drug Allocation of \$1.2 Billion for 6000 diseases equals only

\$200,000, on average, for research on each disease

Fourteen million Americans have impaired vision. 702 million is spent on "eye disease"

research, which is only \$50 per patient.

Join the FAIR Foundation today: <http://fairfoundation.org/join.htm> (free)