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NATCO empowers donation and transplant professionals to achieve their highest potential. NATCO leads the donation and transplant communities by uniting our members, advancing education, and promoting research and advocacy.

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3rd Quarter, 2021

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## MEMBERSHIP

Procurement and transplant professionals, and dietitians who are committed to the advancement of organ, eye, and tissue donation and transplantation join together to improve outcomes and share best practices.

NATCO promotes and enhances relationships between donation and transplantation. Members improve their skills and competencies through sharing knowledge and best practices.

## IN THE PRESIDENT'S WORDS

Dear NATCO Members,

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for giving me the opportunity to serve as your President over the next 12 months. For those of you who do not know me, I would like to give you some insight into the path that led me to the NATCO Presidency. Like many of you, I was drawn to this career path by a combination of a deep desire to help others along with an affinity for adrenaline. I started out as a Trauma Nurse at the Elvis Presley Memorial Trauma Center in Memphis, TN in 2005. Often I would see the Organ Coordinators on my unit and found myself magnetically drawn to those patients and families.



In 2007, I started my journey in the OPO world and never looked back. Since 2015, I have been with Lifesharing, the OPO in San Diego, and can proudly say I have been a NATCO member since 2008. In 2014, I was given an opportunity to be a part of NATCO's Annual Meeting Planning Committee, which led to a chance at being elected to the Board of Directors. Now here I am serving as your President because of many of you. It is my turn now to serve you and provide you with the education and training you need to optimize your skillset.

This year, we would like to take NATCO to the next level. We will continue to offer our successful programs such as the CCTC Review Course and Emerging Leaders Program. We are reinvigorating many of our existing programs in an effort to

Click [HERE](#) to join or for more information.

## MEMBER BENEFITS

**EDUCATION:** geared specifically to donation and transplant professionals to provide the best patient, donor and family care.

**CERTIFICATION:** achieve and maintain current certification requirements

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** opportunities to increase skills and expertise; and develop leadership within your organization and the community.

## CURRENT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Emerging Leaders Program  
[For More Information](#)

CCTC Review Courses  
VIRTUAL COURSES  
September 22 - 24, 2021  
[For More Information](#)

WEBINARS:  
[For More Information](#)

Introductory Course for  
Procurement and Transplant  
Professionals  
[For More Information](#)

*NATCO wishes to thank our long-time sponsor ORS for their continued support of our mission. Please visit their website for more information:*



meet your needs. We are excited to launch our first virtual version of the well-known Introductory Course for Procurement and Transplant Professionals, which began on the ninth of September and will span a period of 10 weeks. You still have time to register! To ensure we are offering the highest quality education and training, we will be launching updated versions of our Advanced Donor Management and Preservation programs in 2022. For our Hospital Development Professionals, we are introducing a new Advanced HD Course and continuing with our revised Core Curriculum course. This is just the beginning of what NATCO has to offer in the coming months. Check out a complete list of upcoming events on our website at [www.natco1.org](http://www.natco1.org) and follow us on Facebook for events to stay updated on what is going on in the community.

We have already started planning our next Annual Meeting, set to take place August 2-5, 2022 in Kansas City. The time is now to start thinking of that great idea or case you would like to turn into an abstract, poster, or presentation. Be engaged, be an active member- change happens through you.

I am looking forward to getting to know more of you throughout my term as President. I am so grateful to represent this organization that was designed for individuals who strive every day to change lives for the better. I would love to hear your ideas and feedback. Email me at [wgarrison@health.ucsd.edu](mailto:wgarrison@health.ucsd.edu).

Warmest Regards,  
Wendy Garrison

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## In the Spotlight



*produced by the*

Transplant Life  
Foundation

## Transplant Games

**by:** Bill Ryan

President & CEO

Transplant Life Foundation

Despite battling the remnants of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 30 year legacy of the Transplant Games was secured with a successful four day extravaganza at the American Dream Entertainment Complex in Rutherford, NJ. An estimated 80,000 people visiting American Dream had the opportunity to interact with transplant recipients, donor families, living donors and

transplant professionals who entertained and educated a primarily public audience about the amazing benefits of transplantation. More than a dozen media outlets covered the event, which included 12 competitions in hometowns across the United States as well as 45 special events and programs. On Facebook alone, the Games generated over 128,000 impressions. From the Transplant Games main stage, attendees were entertained by Transplant Game's mascots Blaze and Spark who led the "Mascot Run" along with the New Jersey Devil, the Rutgers Knight, and other local favorites.

Visitors had the opportunity to watch a rebroadcast of a living kidney transplant by Dr. Stuart Geffner as part of the Liberty Science Center program dedicated to educating the public about the successes of living donation and transplantation. Over the four days, guests were able to interact with many of the Games 53 sponsors and partners to learn about the gift of life and the need for additional organs for the 110,000 patients on the waiting list. We are sure these Reimagined Transplant Games made a successful impression on many people who attended this festive and memorable event.

Next year's Transplant Games are in San Diego, CA from July 29-August 3, 2022.

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## Volunteers Needed



NATCO is offering members an opportunity to participate in the development of the essential programs that make up the core training and education for professionals in the community. If you are looking for a path to leadership within the donation and transplant community, please consider this opportunity.

NATCO seeks experienced professionals to serve on various committees and workgroups. Details of specific openings can be found on our website at: <https://www.natco1.org/professional-development/committees/>.



Believe in Yourself: Make a Difference

## 10th Annual Transplant Nutrition Conference

Virtual Event  
August 10-11, 2021

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual NATCO Nutrition Conference successfully wrapped up in the beginning of August following the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual NATCO Meeting. The conference provided a maximum of 14 CEUs which were emailed to attendees following the closing session. The nutrition conference was held virtually and included multidisciplinary speakers touching on topics of virtual education, racial disparities in transplant, immunology, frailty and more. Information regarding access to recorded sessions was sent via email to all registered nutrition conference attendees. Information on the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual NATCO Nutrition Conference for 2022 will be released within the coming months. The Pediatric Transplant Nutrition Conference will also be taking place virtually on **November 2, 2021**, you can [register](#) here. Don't forget to join The Pediatric Transplant Dietitian Listserv, which has been a great interactive way to discuss topics in the realm of pediatric transplant. Send a request to [peditransplantnutrition@gmail.com](mailto:peditransplantnutrition@gmail.com) to join!

The NATCO Board is pleased to announce the winner of the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Jeanette Hasse Distinguished Transplant Dietitian of the Year Award: Sara DiCecco. Sara was presented with her award virtually at the NATCO Nutrition Conference and was recognized for her commitment to the field of transplantation, patient care, research and leadership. Congratulations, Sara! Look out for the next nomination period to be announced via the Transplant Nutrition Listserv and NATCO website. If you are not part of the listserv, send an email to [transplant-nutrition@googlegroups.com](mailto:transplant-nutrition@googlegroups.com) to join.

Last but certainly not least, congratulations to the 29 newly credentialed Certified Clinical Transplant Dietitians (CCTD) from the April 2021 application period! The next deadline to apply for the CCTD credential is October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. You can find more information and apply [here](#).

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## DONATE LIFE AMERICA

By: Lida Pieterman, Senior Writer and Editor, Donate Life America



### DLA 2021 Virtual Annual Conference – Registration Is Open!

Join your Donate Life Community colleagues for the 2021 DLA Virtual Annual Conference: **2020One Mission, Vision, Community... Saving & Healing Lives** As we continue the work of increasing the number of organ, eye and tissue donors who save and heal lives, our conference agenda will inspire, engage, provide best practices and celebrate recipients of DLA awards. Best of all, the virtual conference format makes it easy to attend!

**Registration is now open** and closes **Wednesday, October 20** (no late registrations will be allowed).

**Key Dates:**

- Annual Conference plenary and breakout sessions: Monday, October 25 - Thursday, October 28 from 11:00am-4:15pm ET
- Optional discussion groups: 10:00-10:45am ET and 4:15-5:00pm ET
- Newcomer Orientation: Thursday, October 21 from 11:00am-12:00pm and 1:00-2:30pm ET  
(Note that this is FREE and is not part of the Annual Conference registration. All new members of the Donate Life Community are encouraged to sign up and attend.)

**Conference Fee:**

\$400 Early-Registration Special (Register by **September 18** to receive a \$100 discount)  
\$500 (Registrations received **September 19 - October 20**)

Be sure to visit [DLACommunity.net](http://DLACommunity.net) for additional information and to update your profile ahead of the conference.

Please contact [Jocelyn Reed](#) with any questions.

**DLA's Donate Life WELD (WoMen Encouraging Living Donation) Program – Get Involved with Living Donation Education Today!**

DLA is committed to giving more people access to lifesaving transplants through educating the public about the option of being a living donor and creating a culture that understands and embraces living donation. Donate Life WELD, also known as DL/WELD, is DLA's volunteer-led, community-based, peer-to-peer program bringing living donors and living donation and transplantation professionals together to share the benefits and risks of living donation through a combination of personal donation stories and medical expertise in small and large group settings.

Open to all living donors and transplant professionals, DL/WELD provides a unique platform for speaking to the public about encouraging living donation.

To learn more about the DL/WELD program and how to start a chapter, contact DLA's DL/WELD Coordinator, [Rose Mary Stewart](#).

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**ADVANCING PUBLIC POLICY**

By: Wade Delk

There has been little movement on issues that are not related to COVID-19 or the Nation's infrastructure. Additionally, recent international events have grabbed much of the remaining attention of lawmakers and the Administration. It appears as though these things may continue to take center

stage for some time. That said, it does not mean we should just sit back and wait for their resolution to give our issues an opportunity to gain attention. There will always be something that occupies the spotlight. Sometimes it might be important to our field, but most of the time it will not. And that is alright. We should always seek to move our agenda even in times when no one wants to pay attention to it. That is what we are here to do and what we have come together as an organization to accomplish. Because even if right now is not their time to shine, it will be in the future and you never know when that will happen, so we must always be ready. When an opening occurs, I want legislators and regulators to have some memory of our issues. I do not want us to have a void in our presence that gives another field the opportunity to take our place in line. I say all of this to remind you that while things may not be moving as fast as we would like, we are always pushing for a spot at the front of the line.

I am pleased to report that the Living Donor Protection Act (S377/HB1255) now has 33 Senate co-sponsors (up from 23) and 70 Representative co-sponsors (up from 20)

The Chronic Kidney Disease Improvement in Research and Treatment Act (S1971/HR 4065) was recently introduced and is another piece of legislation that is on our radar to advance. It seeks to raise awareness of chronic kidney disease and end-stage renal disease and promotes access to treatment. We will be working to advance this legislation as well.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [wadebdelk@gmail.com](mailto:wadebdelk@gmail.com) or call 202-253-7862.

-Wade

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## UNOS/OPTN



By: Erin Parkhurst, UNOS

The U.S. is on pace to top 40,000 transplants in a single year for first time

In just the first half of 2021, 21,061 organ transplants have been performed in the U.S. Organ donation from deceased donors is up 15% over last year and there were 900 more deceased donors between January 1 and June 30 of 2021 than there were during the same period in 2020. [Learn more.](#)



### Fall 2021 public comment

Learn more about the 15 proposals available for public comment now through Sept. 30. Patients, transplant candidates and recipients, living donors, donor families and transplant professionals are encouraged to read the proposals, view webinar recordings and videos about the proposals, and provide feedback. [Add your voice.](#)

**In case you missed it on Unos.org:**

[Community update: Policy development based on continuous distribution](#)

## ABSTRACTS



By: Linda Ohler, MSN, RN, CCTC, FAAN

### **Marijuana use among adult liver transplant candidates and recipients**

Alisa Likhitsup, Naba Saeed, Gerald Scott Winder, Ammar Hassan, Christopher J Sonnenday, Robert J Fontana. First published: 07 April 2021

Data regarding marijuana (MJ) use among liver transplant (LT) candidates are limited. We set out to determine the incidence and pre- and post-LT outcomes of adult LT candidates with a self-reported history of MJ use.

### **Impact of diabetes and chronic dialysis on post-transplant survival in combined heart-kidney transplant recipients**

Justin R. Parekh, Jenny Lam, Harrison Chau, Jennifer Berumen, Gabriel T. Schnickel, Kristin Mekeel. First published: 04 May 2021

Growing research supports an increased survival benefit of combined heart and kidney transplantation in patients with both heart and renal failure. As a result, the frequency of these combined transplants continues to increase. Despite this trend, little has been done to quantify the impact of chronic illness in this population. We identified adult recipients of combined heart-kidney transplant from the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (SRTR) database between 2005 and 2018. We focused on renal disease secondary to diabetes and duration of dialysis as markers of chronic illness. The primary outcome was post-transplant mortality. Our final multivariable Cox proportional hazard model found that diabetes-associated renal disease (HR 1.57, 95% CI 1.14–2.15,  $p = .01$ ) and dialysis duration (HR 1.08, 95% CI 1.01–1.15,  $p = .02$ ) were significant predictors of post-transplant mortality. Given the significant impact of dialysis duration and renal disease secondary to diabetes mellitus, these chronically ill patients should be closely examined for conditions such as peripheral vascular disease and frailty, which have been shown to affect mortality in heart transplant recipients and are prevalent in the chronic dialysis population.

### **Current status and further potential of lung donation after circulatory death**

Jonas P Ehrsam, Christian Benden, Franz F Immer, Ilhan Inci  
First published: 04 May 2021

Chronic organ shortage remains the most limiting factor in lung transplantation. To overcome this shortage, a minority of centers have started with efforts to reintroduce donation after circulatory death (DCD). This review aims to evaluate the experimental background, the current international clinical experience, and the further potential and challenges of the different DCD categories. Successful

strategies have been implemented to reduce the problems of warm ischemic time, thrombosis after circulatory arrest, and difficulties in organ assessment, which come with DCD donation. From the currently reported results, controlled-DCD lungs are an effective and safe method with good mid-term and even long-term survival outcomes comparable to donation after brain death (DBD). Primary graft dysfunction and onset of chronic allograft dysfunction seem also comparable. Thus, controlled-DCD lungs should be ceased to be treated as marginal and instead be promoted as an equivalent alternative to DBD. A wide implementation of controlled-DCD-lung donation would significantly decrease the mortality on the waiting list. Therefore, further efforts in establishment of legislation and logistics are crucial. With regard to uncontrolled DCD, more data are needed analyzing long-term outcomes. To help with the detailed assessment and improvement of uncontrolled or otherwise questionable grafts after retrieval, ex-vivo lung perfusion is promising.

### [Preservation of pancreas in the University of Wisconsin solution supplemented with AP39 reduces reactive oxygen species production and improves islet graft function](#)

Kai Nishime, Chika Miyagi-Shiohira, Kazuho Kuwae, Yoshihito Tamaki, Tasuku Yonaha, Mayuko Sakai-Yonaha, Issei Saitoh, Masami Watanabe, Hirofumi Noguchi

Ischemia-reperfusion injury (IRI) results in increased rates of delayed graft function and early graft loss. It has recently been reported that hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) protects organ grafts against prolonged IRI. Here, we investigated whether the preservation of pancreas in University of Wisconsin (UW) solution supplemented with AP39, which is a mitochondrial-targeted H<sub>2</sub>S donor, protected pancreatic islets against IRI and improved islet function. Porcine pancreata were preserved in the UW solution with AP39 (UW + AP39) or the vehicle (UW) for 18 h, followed by islet isolation. The islet yields before and after purification were significantly higher in the UW + AP39 group than in the UW group. The islets isolated from the pancreas preserved in UW + AP39 exhibited significantly decreased levels of reactive oxygen species (ROS) production and a significantly increased mitochondrial membrane potential as compared to the islets isolated from the pancreas preserved in the vehicle. We found that the pancreas preserved in UW + AP39 improved the outcome of islet transplantation in streptozotocin-induced diabetic mice. These results suggest that the preservation of pancreas in UW + AP39 protects the islet grafts against IRI and could thus serve as a novel clinical strategy for improving islet

### [Donor to recipient transmission of SARS-CoV-2 by lung transplantation despite negative donor upper respiratory tract testing](#)

Daniel R. Kaul, Andrew L. Valesano, Joshua G. Petrie, Rommel Sagana, Dennis Lyu, Jules Lin, Emily Stoneman, Lane M. Smith, Paul Lephart, Adam S. Luring. First published: 10 February 2021

We describe a case of proven transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from lung donor to recipient. The donor had no clinical history or findings suggestive of infection with SARS-CoV-2 and tested negative by reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) on a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab obtained within 48 h of procurement. Lower respiratory tract testing was not performed. The recipient developed fever, hypotension, and pulmonary infiltrates on posttransplant day (PTD) 3, and RT-PCR testing for SARS-CoV-2 on an NP swab specimen was non-reactive, but positive on bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) fluid. One thoracic surgeon present during the transplantation procedure developed COVID-19. Sequence analysis of isolates from donor BAL fluid (obtained at procurement), the recipient, and the infected thoracic surgeon proved donor origin of recipient and health-care worker (HCW) infection. No other organs were procured from this donor. Transplant centers and organ procurement organizations should perform SARS-CoV-2 testing of lower respiratory tract specimens from potential lung donors, and consider enhanced personal protective equipment for HCWs involved in lung procurement and transplantation.



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NATERA is a global leader in cell-free DNA testing. The mission of the company is to change the management of disease worldwide with a focus on women's health, oncology and organ health. The company offers proprietary testing services for physicians, researchers and clinicians in cancer, including biopharmaceutical companies, and genetic laboratories through its cloud-based software platform. Developed by our trusted legacy in cfDNA, the Prospera™ transplant assessment test is optimized to be a precise and reliable tool for early, clinically meaningful rejection assessment. Renasight™, a renal genetics panel, is a comprehensive, accessible genetic test for patients with chronic kidney disease.

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