



Monday, February 23, 2009

3000 Transplants at RPA

NSW Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, today officially launched Organ Donor Awareness Week 2009 and marked an historic milestone for the Royal Prince Alfred Transplant Team.

Doctors at RPA have now performed their 3000th transplant.

Mr Della Bosca said the RPA Transplant Team had performed 2000 kidney transplants since 1967 and was the first Australian transplant service to perform 1000 liver transplants.

“RPA’s transplant milestone is a reminder of the life-changing impact of every organ donation,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“These 3000 transplants have been made possible through the generosity of donor families.

“Organ transplantation is one of the many miracles of modern medicine. One organ donor can save the lives of up to eight people,” he said.

61 year old Lorraine Figures was RPA’s 1000th liver recipient. She also received a kidney from the same donor.

A keen ballroom dancer, Lorraine was suffering from a hereditary liver and kidney disease, explained Richard Allen, Director of Transplantation Services at RPA.

“This common condition causes a progressive increase in the size of the patient’s organs and eventual organ failure,” Professor Allen said.

After a seven hour operation and the recovery that followed, Lorraine’s transplants have helped her reclaim her life.

“After nearly four years of dialysis and having such an enlarged liver, my friends are all amazed to see how well I look,” Lorraine said.

“All my friends are so pleased to see me now and everyone wants to dance with me again,” she said.

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The donor liver that helped Lorraine to reclaim her life was shared with 8 year old Keoni Rakatau at The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

Keoni's grandmother, Judy, said for a little girl who had spent five Christmas Days in Hospital, liver transplantation gave her the chance to go to school and lead a normal childhood.

Minister Della Bosca said survival figures after transplantation have never been better.

"After receiving a kidney transplant at RPA, 96 per cent of patients will have a functioning kidney one year after transplantation. One year after a liver transplant the survival rate for both adults and children is 97 per cent.

"These results match those of the best units in the world," Mr Della Bosca said.

Patricia Wills, Manager Lifegift NSW/ACT said the challenge is that only half of the families approached consent to the donation of their loved one's organs.

"In 2008, 51 per cent of families approached in NSW consented to donating the organs of a loved one.

"Talking to your family now about organ donation could be a life saving discussion. If the time ever comes, they will be better prepared to make that difficult decision as we know that when a family is aware of the wishes of their loved one, organ donation is more likely to proceed," she said.

For more information about organ donation call 1800 777 203 or visit www.organdonor.com.au