



Statement from Trillium Gift of Life Network Re: Liver Listing Criteria, December 22, 2017

In support of its mission to save and enhance lives, Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) applies the best available medical evidence, not moral judgement, to ensure that organs are fairly allocated to those in need.

While the number of deceased organ donors has increased significantly in Ontario, the number of patients needing a transplant continues to exceed organs available for transplant. The scarcity of organs necessitates strict and consistent listing criteria to ensure fair access and support optimal outcomes for patients requiring a transplant.

TGLN, through expert working groups which include health care professionals from the transplant community, develops organ-specific listing criteria that patients must meet in order to be placed on the transplant waiting list. The listing criteria are based on medical evidence, and include numerous factors to aid health care professionals in determining a patient's suitability for transplant, balancing both medical need and the likelihood of a successful transplant.

The requirement to abstain from alcohol use for six months for patients with alcohol related liver diseases is one of many factors included in Ontario's liver listing criteria. It is the most commonly used protocol across Canada, much of the U.S. and other international jurisdictions. Given the current body of research, there is insufficient evidence to change this rule. This requirement, however, does not prevent patients from being referred, assessed or treated by a transplant program. In some cases, a patient's health improves with treatment alone, thereby eliminating the need for a very complex liver transplant procedure, as well as ensuring that scarce organs are made available to patients that are most in need.

TGLN's listing criteria for organ transplantation are regularly reviewed. TGLN is working with Ontario's adult liver transplant centres to finalize a pilot program for launch in 2018 to gather evidence to help determine whether there is a scientifically-based basis to change the abstinence rule for patients with alcohol related liver diseases. Until such time, the liver listing criteria remain unchanged.

To give hope to all patients who may need a transplant, TGLN urges Ontarians to register consent for organ and tissue donation at BeADonor.ca.