

MEDIA RELEASE

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Kidney Transplant Recipient Benefits from New One-Day Renal Transplant Work-Up Process

A new one-day renal transplant work-up programme (ODRTW) in Health New Zealand Bay of Plenty | Te Whatu Ora Hauora a Toi has started paying dividends with a recent programme participant receiving their kidney after being assessed through the new process. The news comes as World Kidney Day is celebrated on Thursday 14 March.

Two years ago, 49-year-old Glenn McLean was recovering from a heart attack. He'd been in a coma for four weeks and his kidneys were failing. Several different appointments would be required to determine his suitability for a kidney transplant, often taking months and even years to complete. At the time he received a kidney transplant, he was doing dialysis for five hours or more every second day.

Typically, it can take many years for a patient to receive a kidney transplant. Glenn's wife wanted to see if she was a suitable donor, but completing the necessary appointments and tests to determine if her kidneys were a match would take around a year.

In June 2022, the renal service at Hauora a Toi Bay of Plenty, introduced a streamlined process after recognising that the process took too long. The new process allows patients to complete a majority of their assessments all on the same day. Previously this required multiple hospital visits over months or even years.

The new process meant Glenn's assessment for kidney transplant suitability was completed much quicker than previously and he was able to be put on the transplant list sooner. Glenn received a new kidney in January this year. The surgery was conducted in Auckland.

Glenn is grateful for his new lease on life. "If the opportunity for a new kidney happens, then go for it. You then have to look after it well, as someone gave you that second chance," he said.

The one-day renal transplant workup programme has reduced the time for patients to be listed for a transplant, removed some of the costs and burdens, improved access, and reduced inequity for patients and their whānau.

"It's great to see the number of patients listed for transplant grow significantly because of the programme – doing most of the investigations in one day has dramatically reduced the time taken," said Dr. Scott Crawford, Nephrologist at Health New Zealand Bay of Plenty.

"From 11 listed for transplant in 2022, we now have 26 listed which is fantastic. One of our eastern bay patients on dialysis took only 132 days from referral to listing," he added.

There are around 200 kidney transplant operations performed each year in New Zealand, while chronic kidney disease affects around 210,000 people. This March 14 is World Kidney Day, a day for promoting awareness of kidney diseases and championing equitable access to care and appropriate medicines.

As for the future, Glenn is looking forward to getting out and about and eating some decent food. "When you are on dialysis you have limited food options, so I'm looking forward to a nice meal and a holiday in Fiji with family," he said.

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