

LVH announces second double organ transplant ** Recipient of pancreas and kidney thankful, says he feels "normal.'

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Surgeons at Lehigh Valley Hospital in Salisbury Township last month performed the center's second double-organ transplant of a pancreas and kidney.

The patient, 34-year-old Michael Sutphen of Lynnport, is thankful for the potential cure of his diabetes and renal failure, hospital officials said. He just doesn't know whom to thank.

LVH transplant surgeons Craig Reckard and Pradip Chakrabarti performed the center's first pancreas/kidney transplant on July 15. On that day, they gave Jeff Mann, 40, of Jim Thorpe a new pancreas and kidney to improve his health and end his dependence on insulin injections.

A healthy pancreas produces insulin. Without sufficient insulin, a patient becomes diabetic and can lose the blood-cleansing function of the kidneys, requiring dialysis.

The operation takes 6-8-hours.

Mann, who spoke with reporters at a hospital news conference one week after his historic transplant, returned to the hospital recently when a change in medicines caused a moderate amount of organ rejection, Chakrabarti said. Mann was admitted, given a high dose of anti-rejection medicine, including antibodies, and was released Sunday. His transplanted pancreas and kidney are functioning fine, the doctor said.

Sutphen's operation was performed by the same team of surgeons. Hospital officials said he told the doctors he feels "normal for the first time since I was 9 years old," when he was diagnosed with diabetes.

Sutphen is a graduate of Dieruff High School in Allentown and the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y. He worked as an assistant chef at the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Fogelsville until three years ago, when he went on disability.

Although he may never get a chance to know their names or thank them in person, Sutphen planned to write a letter to the family of his donor, which will be forwarded to them by the Gift of Life transplant program in Philadelphia.

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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