



MEDIA RELEASE

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Southwest Transplant Alliance Expands Automated Electronic Referral System to Save More Lives

DALLAS, December 2, 2019 – Southwest Transplant Alliance (STA) announced today an initiative to expand its already proven and successful automated electronic referral technology to health systems throughout the state of Texas. The system automatically connects to a hospital’s electronic medical records and is designed to alert STA when a potential donor has met the clinical triggers to help save lives through organ and tissue donation.

Today, more than 113,000 individuals are on the organ transplant waiting list in need of a life-saving organ. With the help of advanced technology designed to support medical professionals and front-line staff, STA is leading the organ recovery industry with innovation and software to help save lives.

“Southwest Transplant Alliance supports grieving families, advocates for registered organ donors and collaborates with hospital staff to help those awaiting a life-saving organ transplant,” said President and Chief Executive Officer of STA Patti Niles. “Implementing this technology platform knits together hospital medical records and our donor records to help drive a more efficient process and increase the number of organs available for transplant. Collaborating with hospitals and streamlining how we receive referrals also supports President Trump’s executive order to improve the organ procurement process and industry.”

The Trump Administration announced earlier this year a concerted effort to investigate and reform organ procurement organization (OPO) performance. STA has been at the center of the administration’s conversations, providing expertise and a proposed improvement plan based on proven technology solutions. STA believes that a nationwide automated electronic referral platform could be a solution for all organ procurement organizations. Tighter collaboration with hospitals, enhancing referral timeliness and focusing on driving a more efficient process will help increase the number of transplantable organs and improve outcomes for transplant recipients.

During the American Society of Nephrology Kidney Week Event, the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services expressed the need for improvements surrounding donor and patient care and the need for technology systems. “We want to do everything we can to improve America’s transplant system, from supporting those who chose to be donors, to managing the procurement of organs, to improving the care received by transplant patients,” said Secretary Alex M. Azar II. “The Health Resources and Services

Administration will issue a request for information about more effective ways in which modern IT systems may be able to manage allocating organs and handling patient and donor data on a national scale.”

Medical professionals are recognizing the value of this platform and its potential to save more lives. “This technology could completely transform organ donation and transplantation by arming frontline staff with the tools they need to help organizations like STA receive notification of a potential organ donor as quickly as clinical triggers are met,” said Dr. Alejandro Mejia, Executive Program Director, Organ Transplantation at the Liver Institute at Methodist Health System Dallas. “This automated referral system will support frontline staff, and in my opinion, has the ability to revolutionize organ donation and transplantation on a national level. It is critical that every organization do their part to support a more efficient process that will lead to more available organs for transplant and more successful outcomes.”

Dr. Giuliano Testa, Division Chief of Abdominal Transplant at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas added, “It’s remarkable to me that we now have access to proven technology that can help increase the number of available organs for transplant. Southwest Transplant Alliance is leading the industry by working to improve the full spectrum of the organ recovery process. A timely referral can mean the difference between life and death for an individual on the organ transplant waiting list.”

Pilot Program

For the past year, STA and CHRISTUS Mother Frances Hospital - Tyler, Texas, tested an automated electronic referral system to help with the timely notification of hospital staff to the organ procurement teams that a potential organ donor has met the clinical triggers. During the testing phase, STA saw a 52% increase in tissue referrals and a 31% increase in tissue donors. Most notable, though, is the impact on organ donations: from January through October 2019, there was a 40% increase in organ donor referrals that led to a 100% increase in the lives saved from the transplants from donors at that single hospital when comparing the same timeframe in 2018.

The system maximizes every opportunity for organ and tissue donation and optimizes hospital and OPO staff resources. As patient data is entered into the hospital’s Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system, the integrated platform is programmed to automatically alert STA when clinical triggers are met. As a result, a timely and accurate referral is sent without additional staff time.

The STA automated electronic referral system has received national recognition by industry associations and thought leaders in the organ recovery space. To learn more or read the case study, click [HERE](#).

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About Southwest Transplant Alliance

Southwest Transplant Alliance is a nonprofit organization that serves as the bridge between those who make the decision to donate their organs and tissues to those awaiting a lifesaving transplant. Founded in 1974, STA has facilitated more than 30,000 organs for recovery and enhanced the lives of tens of thousands of people through tissue recovery.

STA is among the largest of 58 federally designated, nonprofit organ procurement organizations (OPOs) in the United States, is a member of the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) and is accredited by the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPO). The organization serves communities in North Texas, Beaumont, Bryan/College Station, Corpus Christi, El Paso, Galveston, Midland/Odessa, Temple, Tyler and Wichita Falls. For more information, go to www.organ.org.