

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear STSW members,

As I sit down to write my last letter as President, I cannot help but reflect on the past four years in this role. I have experienced the challenges of leading an

organization through a worldwide pandemic. I have also experienced the gifts of friendship, mentorship, and opportunities for developing my skills and comfort level with all things virtual. I am grateful for these many experiences, and I will look back on this time in my career as one of personal growth and satisfaction in passing the torch to **Clif Hill** and **Katie Newton** as your next leaders of the Society.

Our Board is quite active and many of our Board Chairs have engaged committees who meet virtually and share knowledge and experience with one another. I have no doubt that this will continue to strengthen under Clif's guidance and support.

Over the past four years, we had two successful conferences in person (2019 in Denver and 2022 in Orlando). We also had two successful virtual conferences, which allowed many more members to participate together. It is our goal as a leadership team to continue to offer both types of conferences in the coming years while abiding by the contracts we have with on-site locations. In order to avoid catastrophic financial burdens in 2020 and 2021 when we could not meet in person, our attorney helped us negotiate with the hotel and are contractually obligated to on-site conferences in the coming years. Please know that we hear your feedback about offering virtual learning opportunities and are trying to balance the requests of membership with our contractual obligations.

Our Membership, Tech, and Credentialing teams continue to keep us informed and working toward achieving and maintaining our credentials.

Our Research Chairs continue to vet opportunities for new research and for members to participate in surveys by other members of the transplant community.

Our Public Policy Chair continues to work on opportunities to advocate for our voice in decision-making regarding the social challenges our patients face. Please be on the lookout for opportunities to join in this advocacy.

Our Mentor Committee is always looking for mentors and mentees so check it out and share your knowledge.

As we close out 2022, we want to recognize the outstanding contributions to the following Board members as they complete their terms:

- **Heather Langlois** – Pediatric Chair since 2019
- **Jessica Duttkin** – Lung Chair since 2021
- **Kelli Swan-Vranish** – Liver Chair since 2020
- **Sarah Larmore** – Kidney/Pancreas Chair since 2021 – transitioning to the Membership Chair role
- **Deb Gordon** – National Exhibitor Chair since 2022

This leaves us with openings in the roles for Pediatrics and Historian/Nominating Chairs. If you are interested in joining the Board, please complete the Board Interest Form that can be found on the STSW website, [here](#).

In the Appreciations section of the Annual Business Meeting, I made special mention of two long-standing Board Members/Past Presidents. Board Past Presidents **Jan Hart** and **Laurie McDonald** are rolling off the Board at the end of this year. Each of these women has made significant contributions to

our Society and to the field of transplant social work. Jan has retired and will remain active as an Emeritus Member. Laurie continues to work in the field and will be offering her time and attention to projects with Board members. They are both extraordinary social workers and I count myself lucky to have learned so much from each of them during my time on the Board.

For additional updates on all of the amazing things happening in the Society, please refer to the power point presentation from our Annual Business Meeting that occurred at the conference in October. The power point for the meeting can be found on the website, [here](#), as well.

I want to thank you all for the support and encouragement I have received in my tenure as President. Leading this organization has been one of the best experiences of my career. I have had many learning opportunities in this role and will always look back with gratitude for this experience. I look forward to seeing what Clif and Katie have in store for the Society in the coming years!

Happy Holidays to you all! Stay well, stay connected, and keep doing this important work!

Thanks,

Molly

Molly Dugan, LCSW, CCTSW-MCS
President, STSW

2022 CONFERENCE AWARD WINNERS

Two awards, **The Lee Suszycki and the Judy Midelfort Memorial awards**, are presented at each annual conference to two members of the Society who have made significant contributions to the field of social work in transplantation. (To read more about Lee Suszycki and Judy Midelfort, click [here](#).) Nominations are sought from the STSW

membership. This year's awards went to **Kristin Malaer and Chrissi White**.



Chrissi White and Kristin Malaer

Kristin Malaer is the winner of this year's **Lee Suszycki Memorial Award**. She has been a transplant social worker for over seven years. She has worked in Heart and Lung Transplant and MCS. Her forte is MCS social work for which she has become a national leader. Kristin is described as a strong clinician who is skilled in all aspects of social work and a strong advocate for her patients and their families. She is the lead social worker for the transplant education program at the Memorial Hermann TMC Heart and Lung Transplant Center. She has been instrumental in organizing and facilitating both live as well as on-line transplant classes. She has worked diligently with the Memorial Hermann Marketing and Education Teams to update and re-film the current classes. Kristin joined the STSW Board as the MCS Chair in 2019. She has brought energy to the MCS Committee that has resulted in an increase in participation. She has presented at our conference multiple times and spearheaded the efforts for members to obtain transplant-specific contact hours when participating in MCS Committee meetings.

Additionally, Kristin is a strong supporter of professional growth and education for our MCS social work colleagues through her leadership as the MCS Committee Chair. Kristin is a passionate social worker who has been a leader in our Heart

Transplant and MCS Program, and in the national/International arena through her work with STSW, Abbott, and ICCAC. She is a respected member of the Heart Transplant and MCS Team. Her expertise and advice is sought by not only our Team but also by MCS social workers across the country. She is representative of all that is excellent in the field of transplant and MCS social work. Her work locally and nationally has advanced the role of the MCS social worker and STSW.

Christine White (Chrissi), winner of this year's *Judy Midelfort Memorial Award*, has been the STSW National Conference Chair for the past three years, as well as this year's conference site chair. The conference was to be held in Orlando in the fall of 2020, but because of the pandemic, the conference was held in a virtual format. Chrissi continued to work with the conference in 2021, when once again we were virtual and again this year as we planned a "live" conference. In the 37 years of the conference only Chrissi and her colleague, *Jessica Perry* have been involved with planning for more than one year. Chrissi joined our monthly conference planning calls. She volunteered to take on additional responsibilities, and did so thoroughly and efficiently, despite an increase in her transplant responsibilities during the pandemic, and despite becoming a first-time mother. Along with all she did for the conference, she also learned new AV skills during the virtual conferences, which was a great asset to our team and those presenting.

Chrissi continues to be an active STSW member and is now an STSW board member, adding this responsibility in the last year. She displays commitment to STSW goals and an eagerness to learn and professionally grow as she takes on new responsibilities.

Please join us in congratulating both **Kristin and Chrissi** as this year's prestigious award winners.

2022 ORLANDO CONFERENCE RECAP

Kay Kendall, MSW, LISW-s, CCTSW-MCS
National Conference Chair

The 37th annual STSW Conference was held in Orlando, Florida the week of October 10th. Our 2020 and 2021 conferences were held virtually, and we were glad to gather in person again this year. Over 200 participants attended the conference. The conference began on October 10th with a pre-conference workshop, "Building a Culturally Competent Transplant Program". Our keynote speaker, Dr. Chad Mao opened the conference the following day with his presentation, "Building Trust: Transplant Teams with Diversity, Inclusion and Equity". We gathered for a Welcome Reception on the 11th, hosted by our Distinguished Exhibitor, COTA (Children's Organ Transplant Association). Eighteen CEUs were offered. Our annual survey results were presented, and results from our 2022 STSW Survey are now available on our [Survey Page](#). The conference concluded on Thursday, October 13th. We thank all those who attended and the support of our exhibitors.

Attendees commented on the benefits of being able to participate in person again, and appreciated meeting with fellow transplant social workers. The 38th annual conference will be held in San Diego, California the week of October 9th, 2023. Please check the Society website for conference updates.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

► Tech Committee:

Katie Newton

We continue to hear challenges with emails from STSW going to spam folders. These STSW emails often have valuable information in them, conference information, credentialing, job opportunities, this newsletter, etc. Some material may be dated. Please

remember to *stay current* with STSW and check your SPAM folder!

To avoid having your emails go to SPAM, please make sure that STSW email addresses (stsw@wildapricot.org and societyfortransplantsw@stsw.org) are listed as safe senders in your email system. If you don't know how to make our emails safe, reach out to your IT department for a work email or check out these articles for ideas: [How to whitelist an email address with Gmail, Outlook.com or Yahoo! Mail - OnlineGroups.net blog](#) and <https://www.whitelist.guide/gmail/>. If your work puts tight restrictions on your work email or what you can access from a work computer, consider using a personal computer and email address for STSW business.

As always, please send any tech related questions or issues to tech@stsw.org.



► Credentialing Committee

Clif Hill, STSW VP, Chair of Credentialing

Greetings and Happy Holidays from the Credentialing Committee.

As Chair this has been the most exciting year for me, as I was able to put faces with many of the names we've credentialed at the conference. It was nice meeting members and learning more about the great work you're doing.

We track data from October to October to align with the annual business meeting, and during that period 29 individuals were newly credentialed, and 50 individuals recertified their credential. In total about 293 of our members – over half of our 464 total membership – are credentialed.

Please remember that you must keep your STSW membership active in order to use the credential. If your membership lapses, your information will not show in the [search field](#) on the website. Remember

too, that you must apply for recertification every three years. If you are not certain when your credential lapses, go to the Credential tab on the website and click on "[current credential holders](#)". You can search your name and find your information. If your credential expires in 2023 you should get a reminder letter this Spring. You can send in your recertification application any time before June 1.

Although recertification applications are due on June 1, six months away, it's always good to think about transplant specific CEUs. There are often opportunities to get CEUs that count towards credentialing by participating in the organ groups conference calls and by listening to the *Beats by Social Work* podcasts (see information later in this newsletter). Information about times and links can be found on the STSW website and in this newsletter.

As of the new year, as I take on the role of President of STSW, **Molly Dugan** will be transitioning to chairing this committee. Feel free to reach out to the committee at credentialing@stsw.org. The Committee and I wish everyone a great Holiday season and a prosperous New Year.



► Research Committee

Kate Artin

The Research Committee had a productive interest meeting following the STSW Conference. The excitement levels are high! We brainstormed ways to support members in exploring research opportunities, writing grants, and publications. We are planning for a Webinar about Research 101. We plan to meet quarterly or every other month moving forward; we will let you know of upcoming meetings in the new year!

Check out our [Publications](#) webpage for articles authored by STSW members.

Please reach out to Kate or Colleen (Katherine.artin@unhealth.unc.edu or collsata@med.umich.edu) with interest or questions.



► Mentoring Committee

Susan Walker, LMSW, CCTSW
Committee Member

I'm pleased to report that the Mentor Committee has grown exponentially over the past year. This would never have happened without the leadership of committee chair, **Alexander Radomsky** and a very dedicated and compassionate group of committee members. I feel fortunate to have attended the STSW 37th Annual Conference at the beautiful Portofino Hotel in Orlando, Florida. A huge shout-out to the 2022 Conference committee who graciously set aside space for **Beth Piotrowicz** and me to promote the Mentor Program.

It was awe-inspiring to witness the enthusiastic interest in mentoring at our display table. Many social workers who are new to the field of transplant added their names to our mentee sign-up sheet. By the end of the conference, our sign-up sheets included 37 social workers: 9 who signed up as mentors, 23 as mentees, and 6 who expressed interest in being on our committee. After the conference, our committee members expeditiously sent out personalized email invitations to everyone identified on the sign-up sheets. I am proud to say that we currently have **17** active mentors and **11** mentees with more in the pipeline. We have also added **2** new committee members.

It truly is a privilege and honor to be part of this extraordinary committee whose mission is to match less seasoned transplant social workers with experienced transplant social workers who can share their broad base of knowledge with their

mentees, guiding the mentees as they navigate this specialized and often complex profession.

To learn more and continue with the application process, please visit the [STSW website](#) (www.stsw.org), scroll to the middle of the page and click the **Mentor Program** section toward the middle of the page:

Membership	Credentialing	Mentor Program
With a membership fee of \$100 you can access benefits including access to member-only organ specific forums, assessment tools and resources, training opportunities, discount on STSW annual conference, professional credentials, mentorship program, research grants, online subscription to Progress in Transplantation journal and the STSW newsletter.	STSW offers the Certified Clinical Transplant Social Worker Credential (CCTSW) and the Certified Clinical Circulatory Support (CCSW-MCS). These credentials recognize transplant clinicians who have met strict eligibility requirements including education, licensure, experience and peer recommendations. Distinguish your professionalism in the field of transplant; become certified!	The Mentor Program was developed to provide a framework for experienced transplant and MCS social workers to assist and advance social workers coming into this very specialized field. The program is designed to allow mentees to review mentor profiles online and request 2-3 potential mentors. The Mentor Program Committee will review all mentor and mentee applications received and appropriately match mentors and mentees.
Join STSW More information	More information	More information

Or go to the “Member Content” tab. Of note, you will need to be logged in to view [Mentor Program content](#), as it is for active members only.

Please don't hesitate to reach out directly to our committee at mentor@stsw.org, should you have further questions or require assistance.



► Living Donor Committee

Chrissi White

It's been a great year for the living donor committee! We've doubled the number of members and the support for each other and commitment to the committee has never been better. The committee will continue to have quarterly meetings to discuss various topics and issues facing living donation. We've had some great discussions this year including young donors, nondirected donors, and mental health stability before and after donation. The living donor committee has been able to collaborate this year to share some amazing resources with one another. If you are interested in learning more or would like the information for the next meeting, please email christine.white@adventhealth.com. Please note, the

day and time of the committee meetings change every quarter to try to accommodate as many members as possible.



► Pediatric Committee:

Molly Dugan

Hello Pediatric SWs! We are hoping to get our Peds group back up and running in the new year. We are currently in the process of identifying a new Chair for this role and hope to begin to offer at least quarterly calls to bring our group together. Please feel free to reach out to me, molly.dugan@choa.org, with any suggestions now or in the future as we get this group going again.



► Public Policy and Resource Updates:

Lara Tushla

Changes in Medicare for 2023

1. Medicare Part B for Immunosuppressant (Part B-ID)
 - a. National Kidney Foundation FAQ's: <https://www.kidney.org/atoz/content/faq-expanded-medicare-coverage-immunosuppressive-drugs-kidney-transplant-recipients>
 - b. Check eligibility: [MLN8816413 – Checking Medicare Eligibility \(cms.gov\)](#)
2. Changes to Insulin Coverage:
 - a. In 2023 Medicare will cap Insulin out of pocket costs at \$35 for *injectable insulins only*. Beginning July 1, 2023, the insulin cap will apply to insulin delivered by an outside pump as well.
3. Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period: January 1-March 31st:
 - a. During this time patients can make a one-time change to their Medicare coverage if they are currently enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan.

- b. This enrollment period does not apply to individuals with Original Medicare/stand-alone prescription plans.

4. General Enrollment Period: January 1st-March 31st:

- a. During this time individuals who did not initially enroll in Medicare part B can do so. The previous waiting period has been eliminated. Coverage can start the month following the enrollment.
- b. Those who want to add this coverage can complete an application via ssa.gov, in person at their local social security office or by calling the national Social Security number at 1-888-772-1213.

5. Special Enrollment Period for Those Who Use Covered Insulin Products: Jan 1 to Dec 31st, 2023:

- a. Allows individuals to add, drop or change their part D coverage if they use insulin. These changes can only be made by calling 1-800-Medicare.

Opportunities and Updates

1. AST Living Donor Circle of Excellence
 - a. <https://www.livingdonorcircle.com/>
 - b. Employers, including hospitals, can show support of living donation by reducing some financial barriers to transplant by guaranteeing a certain amount of wage coverage.
2. The Heart Transplant and MCS Committees are asking Social Security to update their language to match UNOS status levels.
3. eGFR has been updated to remove race base coefficients. Transplant programs are tasked with revising individuals records to reflect their actual level of kidney function over the next year.



► Membership Committee:

Katie Newton

Our membership currently totals 464. Welcome to our new members! We look forward to getting to know you and continuing to learn from one another. Our [forums](#) and committees are a great way to connect with your fellow members! Check out the "[Member Content](#)" tab on the website for more information and ways to get involved.



► Kidney/Pancreas Committee:

Sarah Larmore

Hello amazing people! It was great seeing those of you who came to Conference this year and I hope to meet more of you next year! We have had more people join our Kidney/Pancreas Committee and are all working hard to create more teamwork among our peers. We have heard your suggestions and plan on meeting more frequently than once a quarter to maximize your chances to attend one of our virtual meetings designed to help us touch base with others working within the same area, learn from each other, foster relationships and talk about things affecting kidney/pancreas transplant. Our next meeting is TBD but anticipated for the end of January 2023. The date and link will be uploaded to the [Kidney/Pancreas page](#) of STSW and posted in the [Forums](#), once scheduled. I hope to see you there!



► Multicultural Committee

Daniela Matz

It was wonderful to meet and learn from so many of you at the conference! The multicultural committee meetings will resume mid-January and an e-mail will be sent to all who signed up for the committee. Information will also be shared in the [Forum](#), on our website, if anyone would like to join. Any questions feel free to email me at daniela.matz@unchealth.unc.edu

Wishing everyone a safe and joyful winter season no matter what holidays you celebrate or not. Peace and Love.



► Lung Transplant Committee

Jessica Duttkin

The Lung Committee has had excellent participation from a core group of members and continues to grow with recent additions! The group has provided lively discussions and mutual support during regular bimonthly video meetings. Our October meeting topic was an STSW conference recap, highlights and debriefing. In December we will share the process and requirements at each center for our patients' caregiver/support person. The main discussion will be about the vetting process for caregivers and what is similar and different about each center's specific process and requirements.

Here is a photo of the Lung Committee, meeting up in person at the annual STSW conference in Orlando. This was the first time we met in person after two years of virtual meetings!



Left to right:

Jessica Duttkin, Katie Havlovic, Hannah Oller, Rebecca Bathon

The Lung Committee is searching for a new committee chair(s). Please use our Board Interest form if you are interested,

<https://www.stsw.org/Board-Interest>, or contact help@stsw.org for further discussion / questions.



▶ Heart Transplant Committee

Tiffany Coco

The Heart Committee continues to beat strong. We have started to take an active role in advocacy. Our first step was to address the discrepancy in language in Compassion Allowance diagnosis DI 23022-Heart Transplant Wait List 1A/1B. In November we submitted a “Request for Correction of Information Under Section 515,” correction form requesting verbiage to align information to the new heart allocation system changed in 2018. We have also notified UNOS of this issue. We are also partnering with the MCS committee to raise awareness on the inequality amongst organs in end stage failure.

We continue to have monthly Zoom calls for heart committee members to join the 4th Wednesday of each month 2pm ET/1pm CST/12pm MT/AZ and 11am Pacific time. These calls have produced some great discussions and email exchanges for ongoing discussions between meetings. Last month we had a guest speaker who presented on providing gender affirming care. December’s meeting will include one of our members presenting a complex case. I encourage all heart social workers to attend these calls when time allows. Depending on discussions there may be availability for certification of attendance to count towards your CCTSW credentials.

<https://mchealth.zoom.us/j/99084009348pwd=Wm9Lc3hDWWFdcG5xSm9Tem5WdTIQT09>

Meeting ID: 990 8400 9348

Passcode: 797912

Please let me know if you have any questions/comments/suggestions related to ongoing

engagements with the Heart Transplant Committee; Coco.tiffany@mayo.edu

“Recognize that every interaction you have is an opportunity to make positive impact on others.” -Shep Hyken



▶ VAD / MCS Committee:

Kristin Malaer

The LVAD Committee continues to have our monthly calls via zoom on the **third Friday of the month** at 3:00p.m. CST where we have guest speakers, topics and case discussions. We welcome you to attend! The LVAD committee is also becoming very involved in advocacy for equitable Social Security Disability application process for LVAD patients. We also have a “best practice” subgroup in collaboration with STSW, ICCAC and Abbott to establish what social work best practices the committee would recommend. Also, if there are any additional resources that need to be added to our [MCS resource page](#) please let us know. The LVAD Committee is always looking for more members and involvement. If you are interested in joining in any of our efforts, please email kristin.malaer@memorialhermann.org

“BEATS BY SOCIAL WORK” PODCAST

Tiffany Coco

Beats By Social Work Podcast continues to produce new episodes. The show has 7 episodes with another in que to come out by the time you are reading this Newsletter. *There are multiple episodes that offer credit towards CCTSW-MCS credentialing.* You can listen to episodes anywhere you listen to your favorite podcasts or by going to our website: [Beats by Social Work \(onpodium.com\)](#) which includes additional information on the episodes and the field of Transplant and MCS Social Work.

This podcast is meant to humanize the world of transplant and mechanical circulatory support from a social work perspective and provide an outlet to bring the community of social workers together.

Please reach out with any questions/ comments/suggestions or to share a beatbox moment with us to be shared on air.

Email: BeatsbySW@gmail.com

Instagram: @BeatsBySWPodcast

Check out **Beats by Social Work**, a podcast by STSW's MCS Committee Chair **Kristen Malaer** and Heart Committee Chair **Tiffany Coco**.
Listen at <https://beatsbysw.onpodium.com/>

SPOTLIGHT CORNER

For this edition of “*Society Pages*” we have chosen to spotlight **Jan Hart**, past president, outgoing Board member, and contributor extraordinaire to STSW over many years.



Jan, an STSW member since 1992, earned her MSW from Indiana University in 1982. She went to work at Ascension St. Vincent Hospital (Indianapolis, IN) as a clinical social worker with the transplant service. She worked there (and retired from there) for an amazing 32 years – and was in transplant for 30 of them! She was the only social worker for the first 16 years, until the program expanded. She recalls feeling that when she joined STSW, “it was a life saver”, as she had felt quite isolated being the only transplant social worker. She has been to 20 STSW conferences since that time, beginning with St. Louis in 1992. She states “the conferences gave me new information as well as confirmed the things that I was doing appropriately” – so important when you are

working in isolation. In the span of her Transplant Social Work career, she has worked with the heart, MCS, and kidney living donor populations.

Jan has many memories of her experiences in our Society over the years. She has loved meeting new people, gaining new friends, and having the ability to confer with colleagues all over the country on cases – way before our mentoring program began. Our in-person conferences provided that collegiality. She recalls her surprise at being asked to run for Vice President during *Laurie McDonald's* term as president and *Kay Kendall's* as past president, but felt secure in Laurie's and Kay's expertise and ability to support and mentor her.

Her contributions to our Society and to Transplant Social Work have been many since then. She has been a speaker at three STSW conferences. She has participated with STSW and other social workers to edit and/or co-author three articles for publication. She represented STSW on the AST's Psychosocial Community of Practice initiative to develop a solid organ caregiver toolkit. She initiated and developed the MCS credential and chaired the Credentialing Committee. She contributed to goals of increasing membership and credentialed social workers, creating the Mentor Committee, developing the Virtual Assistant role, and networking with other transplant related professional organizations

As a Board member, which she first joined in 2009 and remained part of for 13 years, she served as Bylaws Chair, Treasurer, Vice President, President, and Past President. The various positions taught her how the Society functioned, which was a tremendous help to her when she became President, she recalls. It is no wonder that Jan was awarded the **Judy Midelfort Memorial Award** in 2010, which she regards as an honor.

What has being part of STSW meant to Jan? She describes it as the “icing on the cake” in her career;

expanding it, giving her a global group of colleagues for support and shared experiences, and loving the travel to out of town locations for conferences and shared times with STSW friends. She states, “It taught me how to run a private, non-for-profit organization and help enhance what we all do for our career. It was a gateway to opportunities to collaborate with others in our field that I would not have had otherwise.”

Jan has recently retired. She and her husband have two adult married daughters and five grandchildren. At their children’s invitation, they moved to the town where both children live and are enjoying sharing time and experiences with them; particularly Sunday suppers at Jan’s house where the adults visit and the cousins play. Her retirement activities include “driving the ‘Nana bus’ to various activities, reading lots of books, looking for good recipes, and trying to find age-appropriate exercise or sports that I enjoy”. She happily reports that she went to Iceland in September and “checked off #1 on my bucket list – seeing the Northern Lights!”

Summing up her career, Jan says the following: “Transplant social work is such a meaningful career. It’s certainly not boring! What a privilege to get to know patients and families. We gain a deeper understanding of people and situations. I feel fortunate to have had those experiences with my patients and families. STSW provided a capstone for me that enriched my social work career and allowed me to contribute to our chosen profession. As I roll off the board at the end of 2022, I feel blessed to have known many of you and confident the current board has the ability and desire to continue the mission of STSW to support and inspire you as transplant social workers.

We certainly wish Jan the best in her retirement, and deeply thank her for all she has given our Society over the past 30 years.

UPDATE ON THE SIPAT – Part 2 IMPRESSIONS

Sarah Larmore

I have been utilizing the Stanford Integrated Psychosocial Assessment (SIPAT) tool since 2019. Intermountain’s Transplant Services adopted the SIPAT to replace the Psychosocial Assessment of Candidates for Transplantation (PACT). My personal experience regarding the change, within my center, was a positive one. Feedback we received, after explaining to the various doctors and other disciplines involved in our multidisciplinary team, was that they were excited and noted value in the tool being research based. They also verbalized appreciation that it took so many items into consideration.

Through working with the SIPAT and scoring patients as a High Risk, Poor, Minimally Acceptable, Good or Excellent Candidates, our team has noticed both strengths and weaknesses of the tool:

• **Pros:** It considers awareness and understanding of the patient as well as how much support they have. We all know that nobody could go through this alone and sometimes it takes a village. The assessment tools provided are helpful to use, as is the contraindication types and special considerations for listing. When we have had psychosocial concerns, we have been able to back it up with what is in the SIPAT to help give our recommendations more teeth.

• **Cons:** Finances or ability to maintain costs are not considered. Also, if a patient has had past mental health concerns, it is scored the same as if they have current mental health concerns. The same holds true with current vs past alcohol use disorder or substance use disorder. We have found we offer more disclaimers to the multidisciplinary team that

a person had concerns 30 years ago, but has been sober since.

Overall, the benefits outweigh any of the negative, for our program. Since using the SIPAT tool, I feel our social work team has been listened to more and recommendations considered/discussed more often. We have been able to be a larger voice in the planning of patient care.

IN THE NEWS

➤ U.S. SURPASSES ONE MILLION TRANSPLANTS

The U.S. surpassed one million organ transplants in September 2022, more than any country in the world. This milestone was reached decades after the first successful kidney transplant in 1954, and after a serious decline in transplants during the COVID pandemic.

During the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, organ transplants sharply declined by half. In spite of this, by 2021 all-time records for deceased donors were reached, with more than 40,000 transplants performed annually for the first time in the nation's history, according to UNOS. Half of all the transplants ever performed in the U.S. have taken place in the past 15 years.

➤ NEW ORGAN TRANSPLANT PROTOCOL SPARKS ETHICAL DEBATE

A new procedure for procuring organs for transplant is being explored in the US and Canada: allowing terminal patients to die (non-heartbeating), then restarting their hearts while clamping off blood flow to their brains. This allows the organ to be removed from warm bodies with heartbeats. The procedure is known as *Normothermic Regional Perfusion with Controlled Donation after Circulatory Death (NRP-cDCD)*.

As with so many historically “new” procedures for organ retrieval – such as the concept of brain death, then donation after cardiac death – this has generated

debate on whether the line between life and death is being crossed. The procedure has raised ethical concerns, starting with the post-mortem reversal of what has been understood as permanent: circulatory death. The American College of Physicians, in a 2021 statement, said this procedure raises "profound ethical questions regarding determination of death, respect for patients, and the ethical obligation to do what is best."

Several hospitals in the USA, however, are currently investigating the procedure in clinical trials and it is being discussed in Canada as well.

See articles below for further discussion.

- [No Brain Death? No Problem. New Organ Transplant Protocol Stirs Debate. | MedPage Today](#)
- [Revival after death: New transplant procedure challenges ethics rules | National Post](#)

Season's Greetings from STSW

