Creating Second Chances for All Ages: The Live Donor Liver Transplant Program

Jefferson surgeons recently performed their 5th adult live donor liver transplant, which allows a person to donate a portion of his or her healthy liver to a patient with advanced liver disease. The Jefferson Live Donor Liver Transplant (LDLT) Program is one of only three adult-to-adult live donor liver transplant centers in the Delaware Valley designated by the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS). A new cooperative arrangement with Nemours/Alfred I. DuPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington means that Jefferson patients of all ages can benefit from the region’s finest expertise with this procedure.

About half of the liver transplants performed on children at Nemours involve live donors

There have been strong ties between Jefferson and Nemours since the 1990s. Stephen Dunn, MD, FACS, Chief of Pediatric Solid Organ Transplantation at Nemours, explains that Nemours provides pediatric education for Jefferson medical students and serves as a clinical site for residents. Until last year, Dr. Dunn performed every pediatric solid-organ transplant himself. The newly formed team benefits from the expertise of four additional surgeons at Jefferson, led by Cataldo Doria, MD, PhD, FACS, the Nicoletti Family Professor of Transplant Surgery and Director of Transplantation and Warren Maley, MD, Director of the Live Donor Liver Transplant Program.

Lieutenant Commander
Daniel R. Grabo

Upon completing his residency at Jefferson in 2009, Daniel Grabo, MD, began a one-year commitment on the USS Enterprise and the USS G.H.W. Bush as Navy Lieutenant Commander and ship surgeon. It was his job to ready both ships for sea, medically speaking. This included six weeks at a time doing “sea trial” workups between Virginia and the Bahamas.

Both ships carried 5,000 sailors and had a standard-size operating room. Dr. Grabo prepared the GHW Bush OR for sea and performed basic emergency surgery with the assistance of two surgical technicians. He also learned all he could about radar, propulsion, intelligence, weapon and aviation systems, which earned him a Surface Warfare Pin.

After completing his current fellowship program in trauma and critical care at the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Grabo will likely return to a Naval hospital and then be deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq. “That’s what I want to do,” he says, “to give five years of my training back to the Navy. They’ve been very good to me.”