



**UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL**  
Newark, New Jersey

**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 28, 2020

**MEDIA CONTACT**

[media@uhnj.org](mailto:media@uhnj.org)

(973) 634-8298

**UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL'S CENTER FOR ADVANCED LIVER DISEASES AND  
TRANSPLANATION DESIGNATED AS A "CENTER OF EXCELLENCE" BY OPTUM**

*National Honor for New Jersey's First Liver Transplant Center*

**NEWARK, NJ** — University Hospital announced today that the liver transplant program at University Hospital's Center for Advanced Liver Diseases and Transplantation was designated as a Center of Excellence by the Clinical Sciences Institute of Optum, a leading information and technology-enabled health services business. With University Hospital now part of the network, Optum will direct patients in New Jersey and throughout the region to University Hospital for liver transplant procedures.

University Hospital's liver transplant center is the first in New Jersey and one of 61 such centers nationally. Since it opened in 1989, the center has performed more than 1,500 liver transplant procedures.

According to **Dr. James V. Guarrera, Program Director of Liver Transplantation at University Hospital**, receiving this recognition from Optum will provide their members the opportunity to receive exceptional care at University Hospital's Center for Advanced Liver Diseases and Transplantation from our world class physicians. These members who are New Jersey residents will no longer have to travel out of state to obtain these specialized services.

In recent years, a new category of transplant candidates have emerged as part of University Hospital's liver transplant waiting list: people with obesity, whose livers have been damaged by fatty deposits. Technology is also providing opportunities for University Hospital's center, and similar facilities, to improve transplant procedures and enhance a patient's long-term health outcomes and recovery. In late 2019, University Hospital performed a successful transplantation of a donated liver that had been preserved by portable hypothermic machine perfusion, another first in the State of New Jersey.

"University Hospital has mainly focused its transplant efforts on New Jersey residents in recent years, but we can actively treat liver patients in the greater region," said **Dr. Nikolaos Pyrsopoulos, Medical Director of the Liver Transplant Program at University Hospital**. "The Optum designation will broaden our profile in the transplant world and enhance the awareness of University Hospital and our program to a larger world."

“Technology solutions, like the portable hypothermic machine perfusion, allow the medical community to do more than ever before and that translates into saving the lives of more and more patients,” said **Dr. Guarrera**. “People know University Hospital as a leading academic medical center and the Level 1 Trauma Center for Northern New Jersey, but we are pleased to position our liver transplant program as a point of pride for the institution.”

“This designation reinforces our position as one of the outstanding liver transplant centers in the country,” said **Shereef Elnahal, MD, MBA, President and CEO of University Hospital**. “We are proud of the full team at the Center for Advanced Liver Diseases and Transplantation and the leadership of Dr. Nikolaos Pyrsopoulos and Dr. James V. Guarrera.”

# # #

### **About University Hospital**

University Hospital is part of one of the nation’s leading academic medical centers and is the Level 1 Trauma Center for Northern New Jersey. Located at University Heights in Newark, University Hospital is a principal teaching hospital of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and a regional resource for advanced services across many medical specialties. For more information about University Hospital, please visit [www.uhnj.org](http://www.uhnj.org).

### **About Optum**

Optum is a leading information and technology-enabled health services business dedicated to helping make the health system work better for everyone. With more than 165,000 people worldwide, Optum delivers intelligent, integrated solutions that help to modernize the health system and improve overall population health. Optum is part of UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH). For more information, visit [www.Optum.com](http://www.Optum.com).