

US Implements Policy Change: Allows Organ Transplants from HIV-Positive Donors

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New guidelines allowing HIV-positive people to get kidney or liver transplants from HIV-positive donors have been published by US health officials. This new regulation removes unnecessary barriers to kidney and liver transplants, expanding the organ donor pool and improving transplant outcomes for HIV-positive individuals. Such transplants were previously limited to research studies.

Studies have confirmed the desirable outcome of this approach. According to a recent study written up in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2403733>), recipients had low organ rejection rates and comparable

survival rates. This evolution expands on past achievements including: In 2010, South African surgeons provided the first evidence demonstrating using HIV-positive donor organs for those living with HIV was safe. But the practice wasn't allowed in the United States until 2013 when the government lifted a ban and approved research initiatives.

The studies first involved contributions from deceased donors with HIV. Then in 2019, a Baltimore team at Johns Hopkins University carried out the first kidney transplant from a living donor with HIV to an HIV-positive recipient. The US has conducted almost 500 successful transplants of kidneys and livers from HIV-positive donors.

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