

UMass Memorial's dedicated pediatric kidney transplant program off to a successful start

APRIL 2013 WAS A TIME for celebration for the family of 9-year-old Jameson Laliberte and for UMass Memorial Medical Center. On the 28th of that month, Jameson, who had been diagnosed at the age of 6 with renal cell carcinoma, got a new kidney. In doing so, he became the first patient to receive a pediatric kidney transplant at UMass Memorial.

In the past, local patients under the age of 18 who needed a kidney transplant had to travel to Boston for the years leading up to and following transplantation. Although UMass Memorial had offered kidney transplants to children as part of its successful adult transplantation program, the Medical Center decided to integrate that program with the expertise of the UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center (CMC) to develop a program tailored to the pediatric population.

In 2011, the CMC formally launched its dedicated and comprehensive pediatric kidney transplant program, providing Central Massachusetts patients and families with an option that was closer to home. As the first, Jameson's kidney transplant marked UMass Memorial's program as a complete success. Since then, a second pediatric kidney transplant has been performed.

"There wasn't a pediatric transplant center in Central or Western Massachusetts or in the eastern part of New York," explained Neena Gupta, MD, medical director of the Pediatric Kidney Transplant Program. "Having a transplant center here makes it a lot easier for these families."

By providing convenient access, local family support services, easier follow-up and ongoing medical management, this program allows kids like Jameson to transition seamlessly from pediatric to adult care as they get older. Adel Bozorgzadeh, MD, chief of organ transplantation at UMass Memorial and UMMS professor of surgery, attributes the program's success to the hard work and expertise of the teams of specialists at the Medical Center.

"To provide this to our community is a major undertaking. It required the specialty skills of an interdisciplinary group of physicians to collaboratively offer the program," said Dr. Bozorgzadeh in a recently published *Worcester Telegram & Gazette* article about Jameson's successful transplant. "I credit UMass Memorial leadership with investing in the program, allowing the hospital to present the best possible care in Central Massachusetts." ■

