

The Journal News

MEDICINE | REGION'S FIRST HEART-LIVER TRANSPLANT



Rare surgery gives mother 'new life'

Candice Ferrette
The Journal News

VALHALLA
Shelley Guinyard had no choice, she had to go first. The 49-year-old Mount Vernon mother had been at Westchester Medical Center suffering from congestive heart failure and was showing the first signs of liver failure.

On July 2, she became the first person to receive a rare heart-liver transplant in the Hudson Valley — the first time the center's surgeons had ever performed such a procedure.

Guinyard's was only the third heart-liver transplant in the state. Heart-liver transplants are

among the most uncommon multi-organ transplants. Since the first one in 1992, 62 people in the U.S. have received both a heart and a liver, including Guinyard.

At the hospital yesterday, Guinyard was energetic and emotional as she thanked doctors for her "new life."

"I feel wonderful. I feel like a changed woman," Guinyard, who is deaf, said through an interpreter at a hospital news conference.

More than 20 doctors, nurses and technicians were needed to complete the 10-hour surgery.

"This is a very tricky operation. A new heart is very sensitive to any changes, so having another

Please see TRANSPLANT, 4A

On the Web

For more information on how to become an organ donor visit www.donatelife.net.

On LoHud



■ Gallery and video at LoHud.com.

■ For more on health, wellness and health care, visit "To Your Health" blog at <http://health.lohudblogs.com>



Photos by Angela Gaul/The Journal News

Friends and relatives use sign language to express relief to patient Shelley Guinyard, second from right, who is deaf, after she received a successful heart and liver transplant at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla. The patient is surrounded by, from left, her friend Linda Gill-Clarke, her mother, Gloria Alston, her friend Pat Terry, her daughter, Rosanna Guinyard, and her husband, Bernard Guinyard.

Mom has region's first heart-liver transplant

TRANSPLANT, from 1A

operation like a liver transplant can be very risky," said Dr. Warren Rosenblum, Guinyard's cardiologist.

Guinyard's old liver would not have survived a heart transplant, which was why she needed both organs, doctors said.

Officials at a Bronx hospital called in the middle of the night, alerting both transplant teams that they had a heart and a liver that matched Guinyard's blood type.

One heart surgeon and two liver surgeons went to the Bronx to look at the heart, while two transplant teams at the medical center prepped Guinyard for surgery.

When it was confirmed that both organs were a match, an ambulance brought the heart to the medical center while another ambulance followed with the liver.

The heart had to be transplanted within the first four hours. For liver transplants, the time frame is longer, about eight to 10 hours.

The coordination between the two teams was the most challenging, doctors said.

"Everyone was prepared in their heads, so when we went to do it, it went smoothly," said Dr. Patricia Ann Sheiner, surgeon and director of the liver transplant program.

The organs came in two separate ambulances. Both organs were from the same donor. Doctors are not allowed to release information about the donor.

In one operation, surgeons implanted the heart, then the liver.

The two other heart-liver transplants in the state were performed at New York-Presbyterian Hospital in Manhattan in 2004 and 2007. The first heart-liver transplant in the U.S. occurred in 1992, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing.

Westchester Medical Center did one heart-kidney transplant last year. Heart-kidneys are more common, as 520 have been done since 1988.

There are 554 patients at the medical center waiting for organ transplants. Six people are waiting for hearts, while many others are waiting for livers or kidneys.

The sickest patients move to the top of the list.

"The magnitude of the sur-



Dr. Warren Rosenblum describes the transplant.

FYI

There are more than 99,000 organ transplant candidates in the United States.

There are 554 organ transplant candidates waiting at the Westchester Medical Center.

Source: United Network for Organ Sharing

gery is enormous," said Dr. David Spielvogel, director of the heart transplant program at the medical center. "Shelley was waiting and waiting in the hospital for a transplant and certainly had a lot of support from her family."

Guinyard has been in the hospital since March. She was too sick to go home.

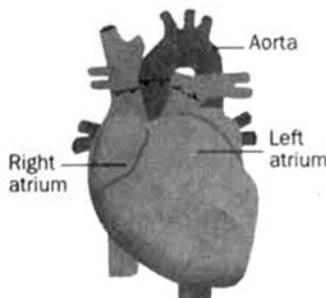
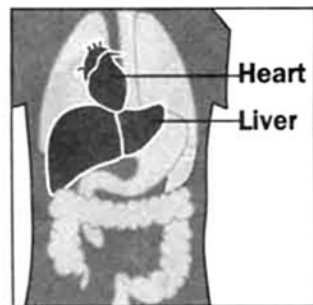
About three years ago, she had a heart attack and emergency bypass surgery. She had been seriously ill since her second heart attack in October.

Guinyard graduated from the New York School for the Deaf in White Plains. Interpreters from the school brought Guinyard's 1978 high school yearbook yesterday.

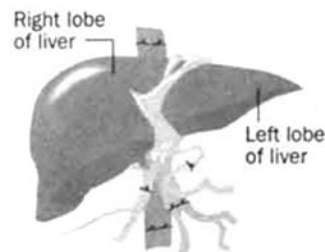
"There I am," Guinyard said as she flipped through the pages. She pointed out a photo of herself at 19, when she was among those

Heart-liver transplant

Doctors at Westchester Medical Center this month performed the hospital's first heart-liver transplant. In one operation, surgeons transplanted the new heart and then the new liver. It was the third heart-liver transplant in New York and the 62nd in the U.S.



A **bicaval technique** was used for the heart transplant. The right atrium remains intact while the left atrium and the vessels are cut and reconnected to the new heart.



The **liver transplant** is performed after the heart transplant because the heart needs to be strong enough to support the new liver.

Source: Westchester Medical Center

GNS and Yvonne Lin/The Journal News



Transplant recipient Shelley Guinyard embraces her husband, Bernard, after yesterday's news conference at Westchester Medical Center.

crowned at the senior prom.

After having been in the hospital since March, Guinyard said, she is looking forward to her expected discharge next week.

Her husband of 26 years, Bernard Guinyard, gave his wife a kiss, telling her that he is "still worried about her." Shelley Guinyard quickly said, "I'm fine and feeling great."

Their daughter, Rosanna Guinyard, 25, began to cry as she expressed her gratitude to doctors.

She told reporters she can't wait to go shopping with her mother again.

The patient's mother, Gloria Alston, 82, was also teary-eyed when she spoke.

"There is no way we could ever thank everyone who has contributed to Shelley's new life," she said.

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