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On The List: Fixing America's Failing Organ Transplant System



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Synopsis

Two families came together in the waiting room of a Denver hospital on May 11, 2004, to await kidney transplants for loved ones. In the first operation, Gregg Farber, 32, a real estate executive, donated a kidney to his father, Steve, a 60-year-old Denver lawyer and power broker. In the second, Guatemalan refugee and landscaper Ernesto Delaroca, also 32, donated a kidney to his sister Sandra, 19, a restaurant worker. The stories of how the Farber and Delaroca families made their separate journeys to the operating room offers insight into the hazards and inequities of a cobbled-together system that each year leaves more than 98,000 gravely ill Americans on the waiting list for a life-saving transplant. Steve Farber’s experience inspired him to write On the List with Harlan Abrahams. They examine the ethical, legal, political, and economic debates over organ transplant policies, expose the gray market for transplants in Third World countries, and propose solutions to one of the world’s most pressing health issues. An informative and inspiring guide to those who face transplant operations, the audiobook is also a call to reform a system that is truly, and fatally, flawed.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

What an extraordinary book! Messrs. Farber and Abrahams have seamlessly woven two poignant personal stories of living organ donation with fascinating discussions of the flawed organ donation system in the United States. When Steve Farber, a wealthy and influential Denver attorney, realized that his kidneys were failing; he explored the possibility of traveling to Turkey for a new organ, and also contemplated whether one of his three sons could donate a kidney. Farber’s story alone,

fraught with indecision and family upheaval, is worth the price of this book. Farber's story is juxtaposed with that of Ernesto Delaroca and his sister, Sandra, poor Guatemalan immigrants, whose options were significantly more circumspect than Farber's. Sandra languished on the transplant list for years, walked six blocks three times per week for her dialysis treatments until finally Ernesto gave her one of his kidneys. Farber and Abrahams meticulously analyze the disparities between rich and poor in the United States when it comes to options after kidney failure.ON THE LIST is essential reading for anyone who has been patiently waiting for years on a transplant list, living donors contemplating donating an organ, nephrologists, transplant surgeons and their support staffs, and legislators and other policymakers who deal with transplant issues. Kudos to Steve Farber and Harland Abrahams for producing such a thoughtful book that not only tells the story of two very different families approaching a living donor transplant in the context of the transplant system as it currently exists, but also explores options that could result in more people receiving precious organs.

Organ donation policy is a microcosm of American health policy as a whole -- its economics, its ethics, and the American public's struggle to balance the rights of individuals with the welfare of populations. The professional and academic literature is quite full with scholarly articles on nearly every aspect of organ donation policy, reflecting the importance and the difficulty of the subject. I have seen none, however, that translate the issues into concrete, meaningful, and even compelling human terms as well as Abrahams' and Farber's "On the List." Excerpts from the book are required reading for graduate-level Health Policy courses I teach to law and medical students and to mid-career professionals. The book makes the subject come alive. If the authors' prescriptions were followed, it might help some patients come alive as well.Edward A. Dauer, Dean Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Law, the University of Denver

While I applaud the authors for all their research on this topic, I wonder why they never did any research or visit any dialysis clinics. Mr. Farber was extremely fortunate to have had a perfect match with his son. I wish he had included some dialysis research. As a dialysis tech for seven years, I can assure you that these patients do not think of dialysis as their only hope. For many of them, dialysis is a way to stay alive until they do get a transplant and many have very active working lives.The author's comment "sometimes I get distressed by the willingness of some patients to allow their transplants to limit them so in their activities.....use their transplants as an excuse not to work, not to play....." was a little harsh. Many transplant patients really are tired and just cannot do much

because of the required medications. I can attest to this first hand because I had a husband that was on dialysis and received a kidney transplant - he was never one to use the transplant as an excuse to not do something.I also concur with the authors that the compensated donation is the route to go. Maybe one day we will see this.

Opens a compelling dilemma on ways to rectify the current organ donor program, but found it to be too self serving.

This was an extremely well written account of the issues (both sides) involved in the organ shortage debate. Farber and Abrahams provide a well-reasoned analysis of the issues that is spot on.

Worth reading.

This book mixes personal experience of the author and others with the law and ethical side of organ transplantation. I love that it is personal yet very informative and educational.

great read.

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