

## Patient Stories

### L.A. Mom Has Dual Organ Transplant

By Tom Harrigan, Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) - When her children offered their own organs to save her life, Maria Alvarez was terrified - not for herself but for them.

The 57-year-old had been on dialysis for 31/2 years after kidney failure, and her liver was more than twice normal size and barely functioning due to polycystic disease. Fluid from the liver had already caused one infection that had nearly killed her.

But despite the pain, Alvarez was reluctant when doctors told her that dual transplants - a kidney from Rosario Proscia, 34, and part of the liver of son Jose Alvarez, 36 - could help her become healthy again.

"She didn't want us to suffer, or possibly even die," said Proscia, who had urged the doctors at University of Southern California University Hospital to consider the transplants. "It took her a few months to get used to the idea."

Five months after the dual surgeries, all three are recovering well, their doctors said Wednesday.

"I believe it is the first of this particular kind of transplant, when one child donates a liver and another child donates a kidney to a parent," said the surgeon in both operations, **Dr. Rick Selby**.

Proscia said she had been inspired by her mother's refusal to give up.

"My surgery was nothing compared to what she has been going through," she said.

Jose Alvarez said pain from removal of less than half of his liver ended in about eight days.

"We feel privileged that we were able to do this," he said. "Mom was very sick for 31/2 years, and we nearly saw her die."

Their mother, meanwhile, said she hoped other people would be encouraged by her story to donate organs. According to the United Network for Organ Sharing, 48,245 people are currently on waiting lists for kidney transplants and 17,286 are awaiting liver transplants.

"I'm proud of my children," she said. "I'm so happy God gave me such good children."



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