

St. Anthony Dialysis Team Celebrates with Vail Native after Successful Kidney Transplant

Vail native Kevin Gallagher was born with Berger's disease, a kidney disease that occurs when an antibody called immunoglobulin builds up in the kidneys. However, the disease wasn't discovered until Kevin was 38, when a kidney biopsy was conducted at Creighton University Medical Center in 2000.

"I was put on medication and told that eventually my kidneys would deteriorate," Kevin said. "In 2016, my kidneys failed, and I began dialysis at St. Anthony."

While going through the transplant evaluation process to get on the list for a new kidney, Kevin encountered multiple health issues. A bacterial infection in his lung in 2017, discovered by Mark Collison, M.D., Adult Medicine at St. Anthony, and bypass surgery in 2018. He continues to see Cardiologist Kyle Ulveling, M.D., Iowa Heart at St. Anthony for routine check-ups on his heart. Each hurdle disqualified Kevin from the transplant evaluation process for another six months.

"Every time I was about to get on the list, another issue would arise. It was very discouraging," said Kevin, who continued dialysis at St. Anthony – four hours at a time, three days a week, for three and a half years.

"We have the best dialysis ward I've seen," Kevin said. "I've been to other locations, but I can't say enough about the team at St. Anthony. My first day I was scared to death because I didn't know what all it would entail, but the nurses explained the entire process and made me comfortable. They are a bunch of sweethearts who have become good friends of mine."

Kevin received his new kidney on February 16, 2019. His recovery went extraordinarily well as he returned to work as a driver for Schroeder Farming Inc. just six weeks after the procedure.

"The St. Anthony Dialysis Unit strives to provide quality care to our patients by utilizing staff that invest kindness and compassion into each patient," said Lynn Riesenberg, St. Anthony Director of Dialysis. "St. Anthony staff endeavor to optimize patient quality of life by offering distinguished services and support. We take pride in the ability to meet the needs of those we care for."

