



2006

# MISSOURI QUALITY AWARD RECIPIENT

## Mid-America Transplant Services

*On an early Sunday morning, a chaplain at a local trauma hospital calls the Mid-America Transplant Services (MTS) Communications Center and begins the life-saving process of organ donation and transplantation. An Organ Procurement Coordinator (OPC) and a member of the Family Support Staff arrive at the hospital to find that a 27-year-old man has been critically injured. MTS works with the family in the midst of their overwhelming grief and they agree to organ and tissue donation. Over the next 30 hours, the OPC works with the physicians and hospital staff to care for the donor and makes arrangements for the transplants. Many more members of the MTS staff become involved through each step of this complex process. When it is all over, a 17-year-old girl is alive with a new liver; a 54-year-old man takes breath through new lungs; a new heart beats in a 58-year-old man; and there are two kidney recipients who will no longer require dialysis. Two individuals that were blind now see with corneal transplants, and bone and skin will be made available to more than 50 people in need. The donor family is updated with the results of their loved one's gift and takes comfort in knowing something positive has come from their tragedy. The MTS staff takes great pride in being able to once again fulfill the organization's Mission of "saving lives through excellence in organ and tissue donation."*



At MTS, it all starts with the Mission. Rewritten in 2004 by employees, the new Mission statement created a synergy among all staff, and to this day serves as constant reminder that everyone who works at MTS can dramatically impact the life of another. Significant employee involvement in the creation of the Mission helped to ensure alignment from the top to the bottom of

the organization, and is routinely cited as the number one reason why employees remain at MTS.

For 32 years, MTS has served as the regional organ and tissue procurement organization for Missouri, southern Illinois, and northeastern Arkansas. From its founding goal to assist in the coordination of kidney donations, MTS has grown to become a multi-faceted organization dedicated to saving lives and enhancing the quality of donated organs and tissue. Throughout its history, MTS has been challenged to raise the bar on procuring high-quality organs and tissue and has continually developed best practices in the field that are now being used across the country.

A vital factor in the success of MTS can be attributed to the efforts in recent years to form collaborative relationships with valued partners like transplant centers, tissue processors, and transplant surgeons. These effective partnerships created a platform for sharing industry best practices and identifying opportunities to provide each other with comparative data. For example, after testing and adapting a national best practice, MTS deployed staff directly to hospitals, making them more readily available to assist their partner hospitals in serving potential donor families in the midst of crisis.

MTS strives to become the industry standard for excellence in both organ and tissue donation. This was particularly evident in 2005, when the organization celebrated a record year with a 27% increase in organ donation, and a top five placement among procurement organizations in the U.S. for the number of cardiovascular tissues recovered.

<b>Vision:</b> Every family says yes to donation, every time.
<b>Mission:</b> We save lives through excellence in organ and tissue donation.
<b>Values:</b> Compassion, Quality, Honesty, Teamwork
<b>Pillars:</b> Service, Innovation, Our People, Stewardship, Growth
<b>Quality Principles:</b> Donor families are our first priority. Quality is achieved through people. All work is part of a process. Decision making is driven by facts. Quality requires continuous improvement.

A record number of donations can only be achieved because more families have agreed to donate. For years, MTS has recognized the critical need to provide donor family support services. Today, the organization maintains a constant focus on meeting the needs of its primary customer, the donor family, through extensive aftercare services.

Remarkable achievements like these could not be accomplished without the hard work, passion, and dedication of the 81 MTS employees. The culture at MTS is built on the foundation of its Mission, Vision, Values, and Quality Principles. The organization strategically positions itself by focusing on five key Pillars of Excellence.

All communications and presentations such as leadership staff and department meeting agendas, and various forms of written communications are structured in the 5-Pillar format for consistency of focus.

The MTS culture can be defined by:

- Visionary leadership driven by a passion for continually looking for innovative ways to achieve best-in-class performance results in every process and service provided. MTS is the only OPO in the country to have internal operating rooms for organ recovery.
- Quality-driven performance reflected by fact-based decision-making and aligned with the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.
- Dedicated, compassionate, and professional staff who exemplify the highest level of teamwork and integrity. A variety of recognition efforts are in place to continually motivate staff to perform at the highest levels.
- A strong desire to enhance organizational and personal learning relevant to key processes and opportunities exemplified by investing in employee education, training, and other career development opportunities.

Critical success factors for the organization are identified through a systematic continuous quality improvement cycle which is guided by the 5-Pillar Performance Excellence model and the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. These success factors are:

**Service:** *Providing service that exceeds expectations of our customers, partners, and stakeholders.*

**Innovation:** *Creating new ideas and approaches to drive growth.*

**Our People:** *Taking care of our people so they can take care of others.*

**Stewardship:** *Using resources responsibly and efficiently to support the Mission.*

**Growth:** *Saving more lives.*

MTS uses an integrated approach to performance improvement, which aligns a specific problem-solving methodology (FOCUS PDSA) with the Strategic Planning Process, resulting in individual goals identified for the purpose of strengthening each of the five key Pillars of Excellence. Cross-functional teams are involved throughout this process, and support for this effort is driven by the Leadership Team (LT) consisting of the CEO, COO, CFO, and the entire management team. To further enhance MTS's ability to maintain a continual focus on improvement, a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Steering Committee was formed to oversee the organization's improvement efforts.

MTS has embarked upon a journey to transform its culture into one that exemplifies a true learning organization. In 2006, the LT designed processes that would significantly enhance the organization's ability to use both its intellectual assets and state-of-the-art technology for maximum learning effect. The newly developed intranet will act as a mechanism to significantly enhance knowledge sharing across the organization.

For MTS, the pursuit of excellence is intricately tied to people. The commitment to take extraordinary efforts to ensure excellence in everything we do remains strong and will continue to grow until every person who is in need of a transplant receives one.

**For more information, contact:**

Sue Stanton, Performance Improvement Administrator  
Mid-America Transplant Services  
1139 Olivette Executive Parkway  
St. Louis, Missouri 63132  
Phone: 314-995-6174  
Fax: 314-991-2805  
Email: [sstanton@mts-stl.org](mailto:sstanton@mts-stl.org)

