

From no viable donors to successful transplant: how one center changed course

UC San Diego Health + NMDPSM Clinical HLA Services

The situation

UC SAN DIEGO HEALTH began a donor search with multiple fully matched donors identified for confirmatory typing (CT). Over several months, each option fell through due to availability or medical barriers.

With no viable matched or haploidentical donors, the team needed to consider a mismatched unrelated donor (MMUD)—an approach they hadn't commonly used before.

A turning point: embedded, tailored support

Kira Ashley, an immunogenetic specialist from NMDP Clinical HLA Services (CHS), became an embedded partner in UC San Diego's search process. As dedicated CHS partner for UC San Diego Health, Kira:

- Aligns donor search strategy to the center's clinical preferences
- Joins weekly transplant center meetings
- Conducts proactive case review and donor outreach



**Stefany
Brizuela,**
donor search
coordinator,
UC San Diego
Health

"Kira, our CHS partner, pulled data, articles and other information, which made it so much more comfortable for our physicians to ultimately decide to select an MMUD donor. That evidence-based support changed our practice."

What changed

Smarter donor prioritization

Optimized donor lists tailored to center preferences—including ABO match priority and DQB1 matching when possible.

Lower-burden coordination

Preliminary donor contact confirmed availability before formal CT request, reducing dead ends and coordinator effort.

Increased physician confidence

Targeted data and literature on MMUD selection and outcomes supported clinical decision-making.

The result: a path forward—and a shift in practice



Successful transplant

Patient received MMUD transplant using PTCy.



Practice evolution

MMUDs now a regular part of donor search strategy.



Lasting partnership

CHS remains integrated in complex donor searches.

Facing a complex donor search?

Every NMDP Network center has a dedicated CHS partner.

Not sure who to reach? Your clinical operations partner can connect you.