

April Wilson's Bio

Christmas Eve of 2018, my mom was rushed by ambulance to the hospital. Testing indicated she had non-alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver. Doctors explained that although she was very sick, her MELD score was not high enough to be a priority on the transplant list and it was very unlikely that she would get a deceased donor liver before the disease would take her life. They said her only chance for survival would be a living donor.

My sister and I both stepped forward but since I was a smoker and needed to quit for at least 30 days, she went through the process first. My sister went through the testing only to find out that the anatomy of her liver wasn't a match for my mom. Since I had been smoke-free for nearly 3 months at that point, Mayo asked if I wanted to go through testing and of course, I said YES! I was cleared to donate on August 21 and surgery took place on October 21, 2019.

Seeing my mom's life impacted in such a positive way, led me to become an advocate for organ donation – encouraging others to check yes and consider becoming a living donor. In addition, her improved health and meeting so many kidney recipients and donors at the Transplant Games of America, encouraged me to become a living kidney donor! As of November 13, 2024, I wear the title of double donor with honor.

My mom has gotten to see 2 of her grandchildren get sober and has been able to see 3 grandchildren graduate high school and 3 graduate college not to mention she has been able to meet 2 of her great granddaughters.

Although I did not know her before surgery, I have been able to connect with my recipient and her family. I am happy to report that Lindsey no longer has to spend her time at dialysis and my kidney is working great for her!

I am still smoke-free and despite donating both organs in my 40s, I feel better than ever, and I share our stories every chance I get!