

Former D.C. Mayor Receives New Kidney at Howard Univ. Hospital

Contributed by The Hilltop -- Black College Wire
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Councilmember Marion Barry recovering

D.C. City Councilmember Marion Barry underwent emergency kidney transplant surgery at Howard University Hospital on Friday, Feb. 20.

In an interview Thursday, Feb. 26, Dr. Clive O. Callender, the transplant specialist who performed the surgery, told Black College Wire that Barry "should be going home tomorrow, and we're hopeful the new kidney will work and will not be rejected." Callender also said, "He is recovering satisfactorily." Callender said Barry's new kidney was donated by a 47-year old woman, who is acquainted with Barry and volunteered for the transplant.

Barry, 72, had received dialysis treatments every day for the past three months, as a result of his severe diabetes and hypertension which he has been dealing with for over 20 years.

Callender, founder and director of Howard University Hospital transplant center, said "close to 500 transplants" had been done at Howard since 1974.

Barry exposed his health problems after being charged by the federal government in fall 2007 with failure to file taxes. Barry has been on probation for the past two years, and he has since filed taxes, according to news reports. The former mayor served a brief prison term for a 1990 cocaine possession charge and was later elected to several terms on the city council, where he now serves as District 8 councilmember. Callender, who spoke at a press conference after the surgery, said monitoring the new kidney for a few days prior to release is to ensure that it will operate correctly under normal bodily function. The hospital recently named its transplantation program the Callender Service in honor of its founder. A hospital news release stated that Callender helped develop the first minority-directed dialysis and transplant center in America.

One D.C. resident acknowledged Barry's faults but wished him well. "Although he's done dirt, no one deserves to be in bad health," said Janice Coley, a resident of Northeast D.C., "especially with a kidney transplant. I think I speak for all D.C. residents in saying that we wish him a smooth recovery."

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A version of this article appeared in The Hilltop, the Howard University student newspaper.