

*Dear Transplant Nurse,*

*I am the mother of a 20 year old girl who received a liver transplant June 30, 2007. It has been an amazing journey with many challenges. To begin with our daughter became ill while my husband and I were away on a trip in China. She was home alone and that was when my two friends took over her care. They happen to both be nurses. Erica became increasingly ill and one of my friends took her to the ER where she was transferred to a major hospital by helicopter. She was admitted to the intensive care unit in liver failure. Erica was diagnosed with Wilson's disease and was told she needed an immediate liver transplant.*

*My husband and I made it home after fighting a monsoon and many flight delays. Erica received her new liver and was seriously ill. We were told that there was a 50% chance that she would wake up. Our surgeon introduced us to the SICU nurse who would take over her care during the most critical hours. The nursing staff tended to Erica's needs and our families. They kept us informed, allowed us to visit and tried to reassure us as best as they could.*

*Erica did extremely well and woke up three days after surgery. She was scared and did not remember what had happened to her. During Erica's recovery the nursing staff was instrumentally in helping Erica overcome many hurdles. She needed a second surgery and faced weeks of rejection. The nurses became our family. Erica was the "Princess" of the transplant unit.*

*Erica spent approximately two months in the hospital. The transplant nurse practitioners visited her everyday and helped to manage her care. They made sure that all of Erica's emotional and physical needs were met. The floor nurses spent time with Erica reassuring and encouraging her recovery. Nothing was ever too much or was any request ever denied. Even Erica's specific food requests at odd hours were honored. Trips to the pharmacy, dietary or cafeteria were done in a timely fashion with a smile on the nurse's face. There were many times that the nurses had to explain yet another test to Erica and they did it with compassion and valuable knowledge. Erica suffered from intolerable itching and the nurses were always trying to help relieve it.*

*When we return to the hospital to see the transplant team, Erica always visits the nurses and there is a huge smile and hug for her. Erica used to have a fear of doctors and especially needles prior to her transplant. I feel that due to the nurse's approach and sensitivity it helped her to overcome her fears.*

*The nursing staff not only took care of Erica but our family. I slept with Erica every night and they made sure I was comfortable. They answered my million questions and embraced me during my down times. The staff included us in holiday celebration, coffee breaks and day to day conversation.*

*The only way I can capture how wonderful the nursing staff was is to tell you that Erica has made her career choice to be a nurse. Now that says it all. Thank you for all that you do.*

*Sincerely,*

*Lisa Stein*

