Liver Transplantation Today: a look at geographic disparities

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Liver transplantation today: a look at geographic disparities

At any given time about 15,000 people wait for a new liver across the country but only a fraction receive one before it’s too late. Why transplant centers consider some patients before others involves a matrix of factors that has changed over time.

Today, for example, committees weigh a combination of a person’s age, degree of urgency and location to make a match between donor and recipient. While these criteria describe an official nationwide policy, access to livers is not the same everywhere.

In this feature listeners meet a young stonemason from Boston as he copes with a failing liver and tries to figure out what to do. One option, his doctors explain, is to go elsewhere—like to Indiana.