

STATEMENT FROM BWH PRESIDENT BETSY NABEL, MD, TO BWH
COMMUNITY

MARCH 21, 2011

With skillful precision, unwavering tenacity and the utmost compassion, an interdisciplinary surgical team completed the nation's first full facial transplant last week at BWH.

After more than 15 hours of surgery, a young man will have, in his words, "the chance to begin a brand new life."

I had the opportunity to visit the operating room while the surgery was in progress. What I observed epitomized what I have begun to consider "the Brigham way"—a combination of incredible teamwork, brilliant innovation and genuine patient-centeredness that is driven by our desire to do all we can for every patient.

Our clinical and research teams, together with administrative and support staff, embodied the spirit of teamwork, with each individual's contributions leading to this life-altering procedure.

As you know, this full facial transplant was preceded by our first partial face transplant in 2009. These two most recent milestones build upon the hospital's incredibly rich tradition in transplant surgery—the world's first human organ donor transplantation occurred here in 1954, when Dr. Joseph Murray and his team transplanted a kidney from one identical twin to the other.

As we celebrate transplantation, let us always feel gratitude for the precious gift of the donors and their families, who make the difficult decision to give life to another while grieving for a loved one.

We wanted to share this news with our BWH community first, and we will announce it to the media later this morning. Thanks to our webcasting capabilities, you can [tune in](#) to the press conference at 11 a.m. right from your computer. Please [view the instructions](#) beforehand, and stay tuned to BWHPIkeNotes.org for more news on this tremendous and historic milestone.

I hope you share my tremendous sense of pride in the Brigham community's most recent accomplishment.