

# Girl, 14, needs a special flight

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**BRITJNI**  
Needs organ  
transplants

Brittni Colas could need a flight to Pittsburgh today. Or it could be months from now.

But whenever Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh calls, saying organs are available for the Gateway 14-year-old, she needs to be there within six hours.

She needs a new liver, bowel, stomach and pancreas, said her mother, Marci Wingenfeld.

"We have had a hard time getting anyone to be on call," said Lisa Maglione, a family friend who is acting as a public spokeswoman and fundraising coordinator.

Brittni's family has contracted with a company that flies

patients. But the flight's cost — more than \$10,000 because of the short notice and the medical equipment and staffing on the plane — would deplete their savings account and leave them with nothing to live on, Maglione said.

To avoid that, the family is seeking a donated private or corporate jet that would be available when the hospital calls.

"The jet is the No. 1 priority," Maglione said. "If we don't get a jet, we will deplete the bank account to get her to Pittsburgh."

Wingenfeld said her daughter was assigned a higher priority last month after she needed four blood transfusions in a five-week period. Brittni needs the new organs because the blood vessels connected to them are diseased and are not supplying them with the necessary blood and nutrients, Wingenfeld said.

Replacing the organs will remove the blood clots, said Kim Haberman, a transplant coordinator who is handling Brittni's

case in Pittsburgh.

She receives two blood thinner shots each day and takes seizure medication to relax her vessels and ease the pain. Brittni shows no outward signs of the disorder, except for bruises from the needles.

Brittni visits a local hematologist every other week and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center four times a year. The Pittsburgh hospital, though, is the only one Wingenfeld's insurance company would cover for the transplants.

Brittni moved to the top of Pittsburgh's transplant priority list in late May after she needed four transfusions in five weeks, Wingenfeld said. She needed yet another transfusion after that.

Haberman said the teenager's liver has worsened enough in recent weeks to warrant the move to the top of the list.

"She has had major life-threatening bleeds already," Haberman said.

## HOW TO HELP

■ Anyone who can donate a private jet on short notice is asked to call Lisa Maglione at 770-6436, or Marci Wingenfeld at 415-0312.

■ Donations can be made to the Brittni Colas Charity Fund Inc., 11285 Lakeland Circle, Fort Myers, FL 33913. Checks should be made payable to the Brittni Colas Charity fund Inc., Tax ID No. 20-3091918, AMSouth Bank account No. 0056315147, Attn: Jackie Patterson.

■ The Chrome Divas, a group of female Harley-Davidson motorcycle riders, will hold a poker run July 23. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. at Harley Davidson of Fort Myers, 2160 Colonial Blvd., and motorcycles leave by noon. The run finishes at Back Streets Sports Bar, 915 S.E. 47th Terrace in Cape Coral by 3 p.m. The best hand wins \$400, the worst wins \$40. Each poker hand requires a \$20 donation.

■ More information is available at [helpbrittni.org](http://helpbrittni.org).