

Texas man gets first hand transplant done in North Carolina

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A Texas man is the first person to get a hand transplant in North Carolina.

Rene Chavez of Laredo, Texas, met with reporters at Duke University Hospital on Wednesday.

He had lost his left hand in an accident when he was 4 years old. Chavez got his new hand nearly 50 years after the accident.

The surgery comes after years of planning, including the development of drugs to help prevent his immune system from rejecting the transplant.

It took just a week to find a donor match once Chavez was ready. The 12-hour surgery was performed May 27 by 17 surgeons and 17 anesthesiologists, nurses, operating room staff and technicians.

Dr. Linda Cendales helped establish the nation's first [hand transplant](#) program in Louisville, Kentucky, before coming to Duke in 2014.

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