

DONATE LIFE TENNESSEE

Organization Fact Sheet



BACKGROUND:

Donate Life Tennessee administers and promotes the Tennessee Organ & Tissue Donor Registry, an electronic, *first-person consent Registry in which individuals can designate their desire to be organ and tissue donors through an Internet website, at their Tennessee Department of Safety (DOS), or by paper enrollment.

**First-Person Consent: Legislation that allows an individual to designate their full legal consent to donate their organs or tissues upon death. The individual's consent cannot be overridden by another person.*

Tennessee Organ and Tissue Donor Registry legislation clarifies that those who register at the online registry website, the DOS, and with paper registrations are giving legal consent to donation, which, per the Tennessee "Revised Uniform Anatomical Gift Act" (Public Chapter No. 428/Tennessee Code Annotated §68-30-101), cannot be overridden.

The registry gives authorized personnel (organ recovery agency staff, tissue bank staff, and eye bank staff) 24-hour, seven days a week access to the donor designation of those who register on the Tennessee Organ and Tissue Donor Registry either online, at the Department of Safety, or through paper enrollment.

HISTORY:

In July 2005, the state of Tennessee passed legislation (SB 2076) authorizing the establishment of a Task Force on Organ Donation and Transplantation within the state's Department of Health to examine the medical, legal, ethical, economic, and social issues presented by human organ donation and transplantation and report its findings and recommendations to the governor and the general assembly by January 1, 2006. Based on the Task Force's research, members ultimately concluded that the establishment of a Tennessee Donor Registry would be the most effective means in which to:

- address issues facing the state of Tennessee with regard to organ and tissue donation,
- increase donation rates among Tennesseans, and
- increase the number of available organs and tissues for transplant for citizens of the state and the nation as well.

In February 2006, Tennessee Donor Registry legislation (SB 2963) was introduced to the state. An amended version of the bill was passed on May 11, 2006 and signed by the Governor on May 26, 2006. The bill authorized the two organ and tissue procurement agencies in Tennessee (Tennessee Donor Services [TDS] and Mid-South Transplant Foundation [MSTF]) to "create and maintain an electronic registry of Tennesseans who have given consent to be organ and tissue donors". It further charged the Tennessee Department of Safety to electronically transmit consent obtained for organ and tissue donation via the Tennessee driver's license application and renewal process to the state donor registry on a weekly basis.

FOUNDED: As a result of the Tennessee Donor Registry legislation, in 2006, the Donate Life Tennessee partnership was founded by members representing Mid-South Transplant Foundation, Tennessee Donor Services, the Tennessee Department of Safety (DOS), and the Tennessee County Clerks Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Foundation.

Funding (\$70,000) to create the electronic registry was obtained in October 2006 from the Tennessee County Clerks Organ Donor Awareness Foundation (TCCODAF) with an additional grant of \$30,000 awarded to market and promote the new registry.

In January 2007, Donate Life Tennessee began efforts to create and maintain the online donor registry AND develop a system to interface with the Tennessee Department of Safety's database to facilitate the weekly download/transfer of legislatively-mandated data elements to the online electronic registry (applicant's true full name, residence or mailing address, date of birth, and Tennessee driver license number).

In April 2008, the Tennessee Organ and Tissue Donor Registry was officially launched and in December, 2008, the DOS database was interfaced with the Registry to complete Tennessee's system for donor designation.

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OFFICERS: Jill Maxfield *President*
Kim Van Frank *Secretary*
Teresa Thompson *Treasurer*
Board of Directors: Randa Lipman, Bridgette Fredenberg

SERVICES: Facilitate registration of Tennesseans' decision to donate organ, eye and tissue donation; provide a means for recovery agency personnel to access first person consent; and promote organ, eye and tissue donation to inspire donor designation.

MISSION/CORE VALUES:
Donate Life Tennessee values honesty, integrity, respect, compassion, excellence, innovation, and teamwork. Our mission is to inspire donor designation to ensure everyone in need of a transplant receives the Gift of Life.

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DONATE LIFE TENNESSEE

Stats and Facts



Facts about Organ and Tissue Donation:

- ∞ Across the country, more than 104,000 people are waiting for organ transplants. A new name is added to the national waiting list every 12 minutes. In Tennessee over 2,000 people wait for a life-saving organ transplant. Yet annually, an average of only about 200 Tennesseans become organ donors after their death.
- ∞ In 2008, 6,627 transplant candidates – one person every 80 minutes – died in the United States while awaiting transplantation. Right now, 18 people die every day and in 2008, 100 Tennesseans died waiting for a life-saving transplant. As of August 21, 2009, the national waiting list included 1,765 children.
- ∞ Each year in the United States, approximately 11,000 people die under conditions that make them medically suitable potential organ donors. In 2008, only 7,990 of those who died in the United States became organ donors.
- ∞ A new name is added to the waiting list every 12 minutes.
- ∞ The average consent rate nationwide for organ donation has risen from 58% in 2003 to 70% in 2008. A survey conducted by Donate Life America in 2009 found that 50% of Americans wish to donate organs and/or tissue, 26% are undecided and 24% do not wish or are reluctant to donate.
- ∞ Only 38% of licensed drivers in the United States and 26% in Tennessee are registered on their state's donor registry. Documenting one's wishes about donation is important, because donor designation is legal and cannot be overridden by one's family; however, sharing this decision with family members is important as well. A potential donor's next-of-kin will be consulted before donation takes place.
- ∞ Transplantation is no longer considered experimental. It is a desired treatment for thousands with end-stage organ disease. Each year, approximately 1,000,000 Americans receive tissue transplants, 41,000 receive cornea transplant and nearly 25,000 receive organ transplants.
- ∞ In recent years, medical breakthroughs have greatly improved the success rate for transplantation... it now generally runs in excess of 80% for transplants overall.
- ∞ Under ideal conditions, one person can donate as many as eight organs (heart, two lungs, liver, pancreas, two kidneys, and intestine). At today's average recovery and transplantation rates, the current pool of potential donors could save up to 40,000 patients waiting for transplant per year.
- ∞ A 1986 federal law requires that family members be approached about organ and tissue donation at the time of a medically suitable loved one's death.
- ∞ A 1998 federal regulation requires hospitals to notify their contracted organ-procurement organization (OPO) of all patients whose death is imminent or who have died in the hospital. It also requires that the person initiating the request for organ/tissue donation must be employed by the contracted OPO or trained by the contracted OPO.
- ∞ As a result of a legislation passed in Tennessee 2001, if a person has documented their donation wish, family members cannot override their decision.

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- ∞ Tissue donation can give the gift of sight, save burn victims from disfigurement, provide relief from amputation, and grant other life-enhancing assistance.

And to dispel some myths and misconceptions:

- ∞ Organs are allocated based on the urgency of medical need, not according to a patient's financial, political, social or celebrity status. The length of time it takes to receive a transplant is based solely on medical criteria like blood type, height and weight, and time spent waiting. The most important factor that affects length of time waiting is a lack of organ donors.
- ∞ Only increased medical need can “move” someone higher on the national waiting list for organs. Rich and famous people have to wait like everyone else.
- ∞ Donation is consistent with the life-preserving traditions of most major religions.
- ∞ Donation is not discussed until all efforts to save a life have failed. If someone is sick, injured and/or admitted to a hospital, the first priority is to save that person’s life. If all possible efforts to save a patient’s life have failed, the family is then asked about giving the gift of life through organ and tissue donation.
- ∞ Donor families incur no expense for donation.
- ∞ Donation is a sterile surgical procedure. In most cases, one can be a donor and have an open casket funeral.
- ∞ Organs and tissues can be donated by people of all ages.
- ∞ People with a history of medical illness still can be donors. At the time of death, medical professionals evaluate a potential donor’s medical and social history to determine suitability for donation. Constant advances in transplantation mean many more people can be donors than ever before. While only a small percentage of people die in a manner suitable for organ donation, nearly everyone can be a tissue and eye donor.

	WAITING IN THE United States*	2008 U.S. Transplants	WAITING IN Tennessee*	2008 TN Transplants
Heart	2,888	2,163	111	50
Heart and Lung	82	27	0	0
Kidney	81,884	16,514	1,815	367
Lung	1,867	1,478	28	14
Liver	15,944	6,318	207	206
Pancreas/Islet Cell	1,696	437	12	4
Kidney and Pancreas	2,187	836	21	17
Intestine	226	185	0	0
Total	**104,296	27,958	**2,173	658
Total Donors 2008	<i>Deceased: 7,985 Living: 6,214</i>		<i>Deceased: 247 Living: 101</i>	

As of October 9, 2009

DONATE LIFE TENNESSEE

Press Releases



8/19/09 – Three Rivers Television Drama About Donation and Transplantation Premieres on CBS Sunday, October 4th.

6/3/09 – Tennessee Department of Safety (TDOS) & Donate Life Tennessee Announce “Show Us Your Heart Tennessee”: Driver License Donor Designation Information Booths Planned Statewide.

4/1/09 – Donor Remembrance Ceremony Celebrates the Lives of Tennessee Organ and Tissue Donors.

1/21/09 – Tennessee County Clerks Announce Record Breaking Year for County Clerk Donor Awareness Program.

11/25/08 – Finding the Good

4/1/08 – Tennessee Department of Safety & TDS Team Up for Life! April is National Donate Life Month

CBS Television Alert

Three Rivers

U.S., August 19, 2009 -- The Donate Life Community nationwide is gearing up for CBS’s new television drama, *Three Rivers*. Premiering on Sunday October 4th at 9pm, the show spotlights stories of generosity, hope and inspiration that are inherent in the daily work of transplant and procurement professionals. Weaving three stories of giving, receiving and bringing those gifts together, this is the first time viewers will see the process of organ donation and transplantation in a reasonably accurate form.

The show’s executive producer, Carol Barbee, is at the helm of this show, which was inspired by the real-life story of a transplant coordinator. Ms. Barbee sits on the board of Donate Life Hollywood, a national campaign to see more accurate and inspiring donation/transplant storylines on television and film, and understands the importance of this show in shaping the public’s perception of donation. She vows to do no harm, and help when they can. The show is currently giving Donate Life Hollywood the opportunity to read each episode and comment for accuracy.

CBS has taken up the cause of donation in their promotion of *Three Rivers*. The show is making deep efforts to share the Donate Life message with viewers, including a CBS Cares PSA by Alex O’Laughlin, the show’s star.

Because *Three Rivers* is not only dramatizing donation and transplantation, but working to get it right and to encourage Americans to register as organ, eye and tissue donors, we encourage you to watch and support this new show. Become a friend of Donate Life America on Facebook to receive advance clips of the show, hear an interview with Carol Barbee, connect with other Donate Life supporters to host viewing parties on October 4th, and much more.

To get a feel for the show please watch this trailer sneak peek cut:
<http://www.tvsquad.com/2009/05/21/sneak-peek-cbs-new-medical-drama-three-rivers/>

Yes, there will be inaccuracies and times we cringe, but already this show is getting people to talk about the incredible life-changing nature of donation and transplantation, something that we hope will have a positive impact on all of our work to save and enhance lives.

**TDOS & Donate Life Tennessee Announce “Show Us Your Heart Tennessee”
Driver License Donor Designation Information Booths Planned Statewide**

NASHVILLE, June 3, 2009 --- The Tennessee Department of Safety (TDOS) will host over 25 Donor Designation booths this month designed to educate the public on organ and tissue donation in driver license service centers across Tennessee.

“We are proud of our partnership with Donate Life Tennessee and “*Show Us Your Heart Tennessee*”, said Department of Safety Deputy Commissioner Greta Dajani. “We are truly making a difference in the lives of Tennesseans waiting for a life saving transplant.”

Tennesseans can register to be an organ donor by simply *Checking YES* when applying for, or renewing your driver’s license. A small red heart is placed on your driver license and signifies you as an organ donor.

“As a result of our partnership with the Department of Safety, more Tennesseans than ever will be able to registry on the Donate Life Tennessee Registry,” says Lisa Clark of Donate Life Tennessee.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has set a goal of reaching 100 million registered donors nationwide by July 1, 2011. That’s roughly 50% of all eligible adults. To reach the goal, over one million more Tennesseans are needed to sign up to save lives. As of May 26, 2009, the actual number of Tennessee registrants is 1,249,698, which is 28% of the 4,387,883 Tennesseans with a driver’s license or state ID.

- As of May 15, 2009, 102,247 people are on the waiting list in the U.S., including 2,185 in Tennessee.
- 658 transplants were performed in Tennessee in 2008.
- 6,229 patients in the U.S. and 96 patients in Tennessee died waiting for a transplant in 2008.

For more information on organ and tissue donation, visit any Tennessee Department of Safety Driver Service Center or via the internet at www.tndonorregistry.org

Donate Life Tennessee is a non-profit, state-authorized organ and tissue donor registry, administered by the state’s two organ procurement organizations (OPO), responsible for facilitating the donation process in Tennessee: Tennessee Donor Services and Mid-South Transplant Foundation. The Donate Life Registry assures that all personal information is kept confidential and stored in a secure database, accessible only to authorized OPO personnel.

DONOR REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY CELEBRATES THE LIVES OF TENNESSEE ORGAN AND TISSUE DONORS

Knoxville, Tennessee, April 1, 2009 --- Today, families from across the state will gather to celebrate their loved ones 'gift of life'. Recipients attend the ceremony to thank all donor families for their courage, compassion and willingness to donate in the midst of tragedy. "We honor donor families today because of the important, life-saving role they have had, and because at life's end, they cared for others", according to Lisa Clark, Senior Public Relations Coordinator for Tennessee Donor Services. "The Donor Remembrance Ceremony honors and memorializes Tennessee's organ and tissue donors and provides an opportunity for transplant recipients to say 'thank you' for their second chance at life," said Clark.

"The fulfillment of our mission is only possible through the generosity of our donors and their families who shared the gift of life," according to Susan Fredenberg-Cross, Executive Director of Tennessee Donor Services. "Today is also my families' thanksgiving and remembrance celebration, as my father was a donor in 2007," continues Fredenberg-Cross. "This celebration honors all who have left a legacy of life."

One of the highlights will be the releasing of more than 100 monarch butterflies symbolizing a release of the spirit, rebirth and transforming power of organ and tissue donation. There will be laughter and tears as the butterflies are released into the museum courtyard. Some butterflies will remain while others quickly fly away, reminding us how fleeting life is, and how precious each day truly is.

During the ceremony donor families and recipients will share their personal stories, and a slide presentation and quilt pinning ceremony honoring many of the state's organ and tissue donors will take place. Families will gather for support, make new friends and renew old ones. Donor families are presented with the Organ Donor Medal of Honor and a Certificate from the Surgeon General by Foster Arnett, Jr. Knox County Clerk to signify the precious gift given. Many families meet transplant recipients for the first time. And though it is not usually the recipient of their loved ones gift, the bond is made, knowing their gift has made a difference. Families will have an opportunity to gain support from other families who will share personal stories during the ceremony.

Laura Lefler lost her younger brother and only sibling, Jack "Trey" Lefler, on Thanksgiving Day, 2007. "Because of his decision to be an organ donor, Trey's story became a resurrection story. Out of death and despair came new life, and our Thanksgiving became an Easter. Through our tears we rejoiced knowing that five families had gotten a call on Thanksgiving Day with news that their loved one would be receiving a life-giving organ. What an incredible Thanksgiving for them," Lefler said.

On Labor Day, 2006, Mandy Harrell called her mom, Betsy, from the top of Windrock Mountain, laughing and saying she was having the most fun she had ever had, that she was covered in mud from head to toe, and that this might just be the best day of her life! The call ended as they always did, 'love you Mom, bye'. Mandy's parents, David and Betsy Harrell, had no idea that in just a few short hours they would be saying goodbye for now to their precious daughter. "Organ donation is not a choice. I believe with all my heart that it is an obligation and duty on the part of each one of us as we try to live our lives in a way that honors and pleases God in every situation," states Betsy Harrell. "We are called to treat our fellow man with respect and to love our neighbors more than we love ourselves. None of our loved ones died so that others could live. They died suddenly and tragically, and we had to choose in

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the midst of profound grief to make this decision by living the values we taught our children and profess to believe,” Harrell continues.

Jordon Hensley was 12 years old when a new heart gave her a second chance at life. Jordon captured the hearts of many across the country when her story was featured during the Thanksgiving broadcast of ‘Good Morning America’. Jordon received the heart of another local 12 year old girl and now has been given the opportunity to ride her horses and enjoy life just as any normal 12 year old.

“Tragically, over 100,000 Americans (2,198 Tennesseans) are currently awaiting life-saving organ transplants. Six thousand Americans will die each year due to the critical shortage of organs available for transplant. Tennesseans can make a positive impact on that statistic. Anyone who checks *YES* to become a donor when applying for or renewing a driver’s license or I.D. card will be registered in the official Donate Life Tennessee registry. A small red heart is placed in the upper right-hand corner of the driver’s license photo to signifying that person is registered. A donor has the potential to save eight lives as an organ donor and improve up to fifty others as a tissue donor,” said Clark, Senior Public Relations Coordinator for TDS.

**TENNESSEE COUNTY CLERKS ANNOUNCE RECORD BREAKING YEAR --
COUNTY CLERK ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS PROGRAM DONATE \$1 FOR ORGAN DONATION
EDUCATION WHEN YOU RENEW YOUR VEHICLE TAGS**

Nashville, Tennessee, January 21, 2009 --- The Tennessee County Clerk’s are pleased to announce that more than a quarter of a million dollars (\$260,790) was raised by County Clerks across Tennessee this year for organ donor awareness. Tennesseans have given generously when renewing vehicle tags. They have helped educate more people than ever on the importance of organ donation and “Saying Yes” when applying for or renewing one’s driver’s license.

“The Tennessee County Clerks Organ Donation Awareness Foundation (TCCODAF) provided the funds for the development, implementation, and public launch of the “Donate Life Tennessee” Registry. The Foundation collects money to support statewide donation education through its program that gives Tennesseans the opportunity to “Donate a Dollar” for organ and tissue donation when they visit a County Clerk office. Over two million dollars has been raised since the inception in 1996. We will continue to expand our efforts across Tennessee”, said Tom McRedmond, Executive Director of TCCODAF.

“This is great news for the more than 2,164 Tennesseans currently waiting for a life-saving organ transplant and the thousands more who need tissue transplants to enhance their quality of life,” said Lisa Clark, Senior Public Relations Coordinator for Donate Life Tennessee. “We are proud of the role the citizens of Tennessee played in funding the efforts of the Donate Life Tennessee Registry. This registry will increase the number of registered donors and save lives. We are making it easier for all Tennesseans to join their one million fellow citizens who have already decided to give the Gift of Life.” Clark said.

“Today marks a significant historical milestone for the field of organ and tissue donation and transplantation education in Tennessee, thanks to the generosity of Tennesseans.” said Clark. “On behalf of Donate Life Tennessee and the thousands of Tennesseans waiting for live-saving transplants, we celebrate the success and thank the County Clerk’s and staff across Tennessee. More importantly,

action has been taken that will save lives, restore sight, heal burns, and enhance the lives of thousands of Tennesseans.”

Tragically, one-third of the more than 100,000 Americans currently waiting for life-saving organ transplants could die due to the critical shortage of donors, but Tennesseans can make a positive impact on that statistic. Anyone who checks “YES” to become a donor when applying for or renewing a driver’s license or I.D. card will be registered in the official Donate Life Tennessee registry. A small red heart is placed in the upper right-hand corner of the driver’s license photo to show that person is registered. A donor has the potential to save eight lives as an organ donor and improve up to fifty others as a tissue donor,” said Lisa Clark.

Tennesseans can register to be a donor with *Donate Life Tennessee* at www.tndonorregistry.org or at any Tennessee Department of Safety (TDOS) Driver License Center. For those who have previously registered as a donor through TDOS, *Donate Life Tennessee* will help them fulfill their desire to donate by adding them to the Tennessee Organ and Tissue Donor Registry. State law requires that every time an applicant renews a driver license, he or she must also renew their decision to donate by marking “YES” on the application to remain a registered donor.

Donate Life Tennessee is a non-profit, state-authorized organ and tissue donor registry, administered by the state’s two organ procurement organizations (OPO) responsible for facilitating the donation process in Tennessee: Tennessee Donor Services and Mid-South Transplant Foundation. The Donate Life Registry assures that all personal information is kept confidential and stored in a secure database, accessible only to authorized OPO personnel.

FACT SHEET

The number of actual organ donors in TN has held close to the same level over the past five years.

2003 345
2004 337
2005 373
2006 407
2007 369

During this same period, 621 Tennesseans died while waiting for a life-saving transplant.

Source: United Network for Organ Sharing

The Top Ten Counties Reporting the Highest Amounts Collected for December:

Davidson	\$26,823
Sumner	\$26,746
Hamilton	\$26,013
Montgomery	\$19,811
Putnam	\$17,107
Cocke	\$15,142
Sullivan	\$14,136
Bradley	\$12,848
Greene	\$10,846
Obion	\$7,898



FINDING THE GOOD

By Laura Lefler

November 25, 2008

Last Thanksgiving, my life changed forever.

My younger brother and only sibling, Trey, was in a very serious car accident and after several days in the hospital he died from his injuries. It was Thanksgiving Day.

There is no doubt that Thanksgiving, and life in general, will never be the same for those that loved Trey, but I believe the timing of his death was significant. It forced us to approach even our darkest day with a spirit of gratitude.

Trey and I both worked for Senator Lamar Alexander for years, and you can't work or even be around Sen. Alexander for very long without hearing him quote his friend Alex Haley who said, "Find the good and praise it."

For me, part of "the good" came when we learned that Trey would die the same way he lived, by loving and giving. I like to say that Trey, more than anyone else I know, tried to live his life according to our Lord's commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. As a natural extension of his generous spirit he had chosen to be an organ and tissue donor and because of his loving choice at least five people were given new life: two single mothers in their 40s, a 56-year-old mother of two who had been married for 28 years, a 36-year-old gentleman who enjoyed fishing (one of Trey's favorite pastimes), and a 62-year-old physician and father of four who had been on the transplant list for two years.

My family has learned a lot about organ donation in the year since Trey's death. In particular, we've experienced firsthand that while marking "yes" to organ donation is critical, it's just as important to share your wishes with family members. As the Tennessee Donor Services Web site states: "A discussion with family now will mean a life-affirming decision later."

According to Tennessee Donor Services (TDS), Trey renewed his driver's license at a kiosk in Nashville on May 14, 2007, and marked "yes" to organ and tissue donation. His girlfriend, Jane, also recalled a conversation with Trey just a few weeks before his death indicating his wish to donate "everything." She remembers him saying, "I'll be with the Big Guy. Give it all." As we sat in the hospital waiting room, I struggled with the decision to donate his eyes. It seemed so invasive. But they were not my eyes to give. They were Trey's, he didn't need them in heaven, and he had made it very clear to "give it all."

Many people find talk of organ donation uncomfortable and maybe even morbid. And many people believe organ donation is a good thing, but just put off doing something about it for another day. According to TDS, a survey conducted by the National Coalition on Donation found that 91 percent of respondents support donation, and yet 29 percent have taken no action to indicate their wishes via their driver's license, donor card, living will, or by simply telling their family. That was me. I'm embarrassed to say that I signed my driver's license the day that Trey died. I'm so thankful that my responsible brother was not part of that 29 percent like I was.

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Because of his decision to be an organ donor, Trey's story became a resurrection story. Out of death and despair came new life, and our Thanksgiving became an Easter. Through our tears we rejoiced knowing that five families had gotten a call on Thanksgiving Day with news that their loved one would be receiving a life-giving organ. What an incredible Thanksgiving for them!

True story: On my mother's birthday last March she was having dinner with my stepfather at a restaurant in their hometown, 250 miles from the site of Trey's hospitalization, when a gentleman approached her and thanked her for the very special gift her son had given him. It was the 62-year-old physician and the keeper of one of Trey's kidneys. The gift – the good – had come full circle.

Laura Lefler is from Loudon, TN and currently lives in Washington, D.C. where she serves as press secretary for U.S. Senator Bob Corker. Before his death on November 22, 2007, Trey Lefler, 25, was serving as state field representative for U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander's reelection campaign.

TDOS & TENNESSEE DONOR SERVICES TEAM UP FOR LIFE

APRIL IS NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH

Nashville, Tennessee, April 1, 2008 --- The Tennessee Department of Safety and Tennessee Donor Services will host Donor Designation booths to educate the public on organ and tissue donation. The public awareness campaign is part of National Donate Life Month. The campaign will provide organ donor information at Driver License Centers in Davidson, Knox, Hamilton and Washington counties as the Tennessee Department of Safety "teams up for life" with Tennessee Donor Services. Special Information booths will answer questions on how Tennesseans can register to become an organ and tissue donor. Tennesseans can register to be an organ donor by simply *CHECKING YES* when applying for, or renewing a driver's license. Everyone who registers and gets a heart on their license will receive a free "Donate Life" back pack from Tennessee Donor Services (TDS).

"We are proud of our partnership with Tennessee Donor Services in making a difference in the lives of hundreds of Tennesseans waiting for life saving transplants," said Department of Safety Commissioner Dave Mitchell. "As a result of our partnership with the Department of Safety, more Tennesseans than ever will be able to register on the Donate Life Tennessee registry", said Lisa Clark, with Donate Life Tennessee.

The registration process has also been simplified for Tennessee residents. For those who have previously registered as a donor through the TDOS, "Donate Life Tennessee" will help them fulfill their desire to donate by adding them to the Tennessee Organ and Tissue Donor Registry.

Tennesseans can register to become an organ donor at any Tennessee Driver License Center or via the internet at www.tndonorregistry.org. Register today to become an organ and tissue donor.

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DONATE LIFE TENNESSEE

FAQs



Frequently Asked Questions:

Following are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about organ and tissue donation, transplantation, and the donor registry.

The FAQs are presented in the following categories:

- DONATION BASICS
- SIGNING UP
- THE DONATION PROCESS
- AFTER YOU SIGN UP
- FAMILY/SOCIAL ISSUES
- MANAGEMENT OF THE REGISTRY

DONATION BASICS

What is organ and tissue donation?

Organ and tissue donation is the process of recovering organs and tissues from a deceased person and transplanting them into others in order to save or enhance the lives of those in need. Up to eight lives can be saved through organ donation, and another 50 lives may be improved through tissue donation.

How many people need donated organs and tissue?

There are currently more than 100,000 people in the U.S. waiting for organ transplants. Each year, approximately 6,000 people die waiting for an organ transplant that would have given them a second chance at life with their families. Additionally, each year hundreds of thousands of people benefit from donated tissue that is used for life-saving and reconstructive purposes.

What organs and tissues may be donated?

The most commonly transplanted organs are the kidneys, liver, heart and lungs. In recent years, success has been achieved in curing diabetes with a pancreas transplant or utilizing cells extracted from the pancreas (islet cells) that produce insulin. Although only a small number of intestinal transplants have been performed, this treatment holds great hope for patients whose intestines have been severely damaged through illness, trauma or birth defects.

As for tissues: - Skin is used as a temporary dressing for burns, serious abrasions and other exposed areas. - Bone is used in orthopedic surgery to facilitate healing of fractures or to prevent amputation. - Heart valves are used to replace defective valves. - Tendons are used to repair torn ligaments on knees or other joints. - Veins are used in cardiac bypass surgery. - Corneas can restore sight to the blind. - Many tissues that cannot be used for transplant can be recovered and used in a variety of research studies to advance medical science.

SIGNING UP

Can my family override my decision to donate?

Once you sign up with the Donate Life Tennessee Registry, your donor designation grants authorization for organ and tissue recovery. Should you be able to donate, your next of kin will be presented with documentation of your registration but will not have the power to override your decision.

Why register? Isn't it enough to sign my driver's license?

Until 2007, there was no official list or record of people who signed their licenses or ID cards. Now, the Department of Safety driver's license and ID card application and renewal forms include the statement: "Yes, I want to be an organ and tissue donor." Checking YES on the form automatically enrolls the applicant in the Donate Life Tennessee Registry, and a small red heart symbol will be pre-printed on the applicant's driver license or ID card at the top right of the picture.

A signed and witnessed donor card or back of the driver's license does grant authorization for organ and/or tissue recovery, but due to the suddenness and emotion surrounding the circumstances, a donor card is rarely available at the time a family is approached regarding donation. Without documentation of a loved one's wishes, families often decline to authorize donation. By signing up with the Donate Life Tennessee Registry, through the Department of Safety or online, your desire to donate is stored in a secure, confidential database. Should your death result in the opportunity for you to be a donor, an official record of your donor designation will be readily available and cannot be overturned by your family. Thus, should you be medically suitable to donate, your wishes will be respected and your family will be relieved of the burden of making a decision on your behalf.

Does my age, or medical condition prevent me from being a donor?

Do not rule yourself out. The fact that you want to be a donor is something to be celebrated, and we encourage you to register your decision with pride. Age and most medical conditions do not exclude you from being a suitable organ and tissue donor. (In fact, there has been a 93-year-old kidney donor and a 99-year-old cornea donor!) There are very few automatic rule-outs, and due to medical advancements, even some of these may change over time. Medical specialists will evaluate your medical history to determine your suitability to donate. If you wish to be a donor, sign up!

Can I sign up my children?

Due to federal privacy laws prohibiting the collection of personal information for individuals under age 13, the Donate Life Tennessee Registry is unable to accept registrations for children 12 and under. Until registrants and non-registrants alike are 18 years old, their parents (or legal guardians) will make the final decision about organ and tissue donation at the appropriate time.

How do you ensure that someone does not sign up another person without his or her knowledge or consent?

Of the 40+ state donor registries now in operation, to date there have been no reported problems with persons registering people other than themselves. The authenticity of the registrant can be determined using the date/time of the registration, and personal information requested during the signup process. Family members are also consulted at the time of donation and will be able to verify the donor's information at that time.

I have an advance directive authorizing donation of my organs. Should I also register with the Donate Life Tennessee Registry, or will the advance directive be enough?

In Tennessee, signing up on the Donate Life Tennessee Registry is the only way to fully ensure that your wishes to donate are honored. Due to the rapid and emotional nature of events surrounding sudden death, often times families do not have time to check legal documents prior to being approached about donation. However, since the Donate Life Tennessee Registry is consulted in all potential donation cases prior to approaching the family, we are able to share proof of registration with family members at the time donation is discussed with them. Each state has its own laws regarding consent for organ and tissue donation. Some states have registries while others rely on donor cards or advance directives. If consent is not given through any of these means, all states defer to next of kin to make the donation decision on behalf of their loved one.

What if I don't have an email account or access to a computer?

If you do not have an email account, you can get a free email account by visiting <http://www.hotmail.com> or you may also use the email address of a relative, or simply leave the e-mail field blank (however, you will not receive an email registration confirmation if you do so). If you do not have access to your own computer, you may sign up at your neighborhood library.

I don't want to sign up online. Is there any other way to register?

In addition to online registrations, you may download a [registration form](#) to complete and mail or you may sign up with the Donate Life Tennessee Registry when you apply for or renew your driver's license or ID card through the Tennessee Department of Safety (DOS). If you are unable to sign up online or via the DOS, you may sign a donor card to indicate your wishes. However, you should share your decision with your next of kin in case the donor card is not available at the time you become a candidate to actually donate.

AFTER YOU SIGN UP

How do I print my registration card?

The screen that confirms your registration displays your unique Registration ID and Password. It also includes a donor card that can be cut out and placed in your wallet. It is not necessary to carry a donor card, as you are registered in the Donate Life Tennessee database. At any time, you may return to the registry website, click on "Update My Profile", enter your log in information, then print the confirmation screen.

What do I do if I've lost my Registration ID number and/or my password?

You may sign up again with your most current information and your most recent registration record will be used in the event that you are a potential donor. However, it is recommended that you keep your Registration ID and Password in a safe place for making updates.

How do I make changes to my registration?

If you sign up online, the screen that confirms your registration displays your unique Registration ID and Password. If you sign up at the Department of Safety, your driver's license number acts as your Registration ID number. At any time, you may visit the registry website, click on "Update My Profile", enter your log-in information, then change your password, personal information, specify donation limitations or remove your name from the Donate Life Tennessee Registry.

I made a mistake on my registration and I am unable to change it when I "Update My Profile".

To protect your identity, the Donate Life Tennessee Registry will not allow changes to key pieces of personally identifying information, such as your name and date of birth, once you have signed up. You will need to re-register. Having multiple registrations is not a problem. We will simply consider the most recent registration to be the binding one.

If something should happen to me while I am traveling, what role does my registration play?

All matters concerning organ and tissue donation are under the jurisdiction of each state's or country's respective laws. While your Donate Life Tennessee registration will not serve as legally binding consent for donation outside Tennessee, it will serve as a clear indication of your wish to donate and will be shared with your family when they are approached by the local organ recovery agency.

How do I cancel my registration if I signed up online?

If you sign up online, the screen that confirms your registration displays your unique Registration ID and Password. If you sign up via the Department of Safety, your driver's license number acts as your Registration ID number. At any time, you may visit the registry website, click on "Update My Profile", enter your log-in information, then check the box to remove your name from the Donate Life Tennessee Registry's list of designated donors.

How do I cancel my registration if I signed up via the Department of Safety?

The way to cancel your registration as a donor if you sign up with Donate Life Tennessee at the Department of Safety is to remove your name from the list of designated donors. First, visit the registry website, click on "Update My Profile", enter your log in information, then check the box to remove your name from the Donate Life Tennessee Registry's list of designated donors. Verification of donor designation is only done through the Donate Life Tennessee Registry database and your name has been removed from the registry's list of designated donors. It is, however, always important to share with your family and friends your decision about organ donation. If anything does happen to you, your family members will be asked about your wishes.

NOTE: If you sign up via the Department of Safety, it can take up to fourteen business days for your registration information to transfer to the Donate Life Tennessee online database. If you try to access your record and it cannot be found, please allow time for the information to transfer.

THE DONATION PROCESS

How can my organs and tissues be used for research?

Organs and tissues that are not recovered for transplant may be used for medical research if the donor (or family, in lieu of a registry record) authorizes it. Non-transplantable organs and tissues help researchers every day find new ways to treat disease. A gift of organs and tissues for research can affect untold numbers of patients who benefit from the medical advances that result from their use in the laboratory. Virtually every disease that plagues mankind is being studied today with the help of donated human organs and tissues that cannot be transplanted.

What if I don't want my organs and/or tissues to be used for research?

Donated organs and tissues may be used for the purpose of transplantation or therapy. However, if the gift cannot be used for transplantation or therapy, the organ and/or tissue may be used for education and/or medical research. The Donate Life Tennessee Registry allows you to opt out of donating organs

and/or tissues for research. During the signup process, check off the "Specify Donations" box and do NOT check the "For Research" box under both Organs and Tissues. If you have already signed up online or via the Department of Safety, you may go to the registry website, click on "Update My Profile", enter your log in information, then specify your donations. While updating your profile you may also change your password and personal information or remove your name from the Donate Life Tennessee Registry.

Can I specify which organs and tissues I donate?

By checking the "Specify Donations" box on the first signup page, the subsequent page allows you to opt out of donating specific organs and/or tissues you wish to donate for medical research. In addition, you can specify that your donated tissue must be used for life-saving or reconstructive purposes only; distributed only to non-profit organizations; or distributed only in the United States.

FAMILY/SOCIAL ISSUES

What if my family members are opposed to donation?

Once an individual has made the decision to be an organ and tissue donor and has joined the Donate Life Tennessee Registry, that individual's decision is honored. Family members cannot override that individual's decision to donate. At the time when donation is possible, family members will be informed of their loved one's wish to donate and walked through the process so they will know and understand how the recovery agency will carry out the deceased's decision to be a donor. In the event of a loved one's sudden death, it will ease the family's pain to already know the wishes of their loved one regarding donation. For this reason we recommend that you share your wishes with your family today.

MANAGEMENT OF THE REGISTRY

How can I be sure my information is kept confidential?

As a state-authorized public service, Donate Life Tennessee adheres to the strictest and most up-to-date guidelines to keep all personal information confidential. Aside from standard information such as name and address, the only sensitive information we require is place of birth, mother's maiden name, and driver's license number/State ID. Why collect this information? Because it is absolutely vital that we identify individual registrants with 100% certainty if they should ever be in a position to become an organ or tissue donor. We would never want to confuse a patient who is not registered with someone who is. We assure you that every precaution is in place to protect the information from identity thieves. Of the 40+ state donor registries now in operation, there are no reported problems with unauthorized access to personal information.

How can I make a financial contribution to Donate Life Tennessee?

We appreciate your interest in contributing to our efforts to help people in need of organ and tissue transplants. Donate Life Tennessee, a state-authorized, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, is dedicated to saving the lives of thousands of Tennesseans awaiting life-saving transplants. Your monetary donations are tax-deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law. Contributions may be mailed to Donate Life Tennessee, 1600 Hayes Street, Nashville, TN 37203. Thank you for supporting the effort to save lives through donation.