



# Give the Gift of Life!

## *Organ and Tissue Donations*

Every year, more than 1,500 people receive kidneys, livers, and hearts that have been donated for transplantation. However, with more than 8,000 New Yorkers still on waiting lists, the need for organ donations far exceeds the supply. One person who donates organs (hearts, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas and intestines) can save up to eight lives, while a tissue donor (corneas, bone, skin, heart valves, tendons, veins, etc.) can improve 12 or more lives by restoring eyesight, helping fight infections in burn patients and preventing the loss of mobility and disability.

By enrolling in the Donate Life Registry, you are giving legal consent for the recovery of your organs, tissues and eyes for the purposes of transplantation and research at the time of your death.

## *Donor Registry*

### **How You Can Donate Life -**

The *Gift of Life* comes in many different ways through many different stories, personalities, lives and backgrounds. Through organ and tissue donation, you have the capability to save and enhance the lives of up to fifty people. Few things we leave behind in life could be as important.

To register as an organ and tissue donor, follow these important steps. **Please remember that signing the back of your Driver's License is not enough!** Although it is an act in support of donation, it does not enroll you in the electronic statewide database readily accessible by hospitals and procurement organizations.

**STEP 1:** Tell your family of your intention to donate. This is the most important step.

**STEP 2:** Enroll in the **New York State Donate Life Registry** – Enrollment form enclosed.

Please consider “Giving the Gift of Life” – complete the enclosed postage paid Enrollment Form.

*Information courtesy of  
St. Anthony's Respect Life Committee*

**See reverse side for “Frequently Asked Questions”**

## **Organ Donation Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q: Why are organ, tissue and eye donations needed?**

**A:** There is a severe shortage of organs for life-saving transplants. In addition to those New Yorkers awaiting organ transplants, thousands more benefit from tissue donation such as skin for burn victims or eye donations for sight-restoring cornea transplants. Without these surgeries, they will die or remain disabled. Transplants give people a chance to resume full, productive lives.

### **Q: Who can become a donor?**

**A:** Anyone can decide to become a donor. A person's medical history or age does not automatically exclude him or her from being a donor. Do not rule yourself out. Medical professionals will determine your suitability for donation at the time of your death.

### **Q: How do I become an organ, tissue and eye donor?**

**A:** Enroll in the New York State Donate Life Registry by signing the donor box on your driver license or non-driver identification (ID) card application or renewal form. You can also enroll through the New York State Health Department's web site, [www.nyhealth.gov/professionals/patients/donation/organ/](http://www.nyhealth.gov/professionals/patients/donation/organ/)

### **Q: What happens when I enroll in the Donate Life Registry?**

**A:** By enrolling in the Donate Life Registry, you are giving legal consent for the recovery of your organs, tissues and eyes for the purposes of transplantation and research at the time of your death. Registry information is kept strictly confidential and can only be accessed by a) Department of Health employees when required for the performance of their official duties, b) federally regulated organ procurement organizations, c) New York State licensed tissue and eye banks and d) other entities formally approved by the Commissioner. Such access can only be for the purpose of identifying potential organ and tissue donors at or near the time of death.

### **Q: Is there any age restriction on joining the registry?**

**A:** Yes. You must be at least 18 years of age to register.

### **Q: If I enroll in the Donate Life Registry, will medical care be compromised?**

**A:** No. Donation is only considered after all efforts to save the patient have failed and the patient has died. Saving the patient's life is the health care provider's first priority.

### **Q: What will happen to my donated organs and tissues?**

**A:** When someone dies, the local organ procurement organization, tissue bank or eye bank matches those donor's organs, tissues and eyes, as specified in the registry, with people waiting for transplants. Patients who receive your organs will be identified based upon many factors, including blood type, severity of illness and other medical criteria. Factors, such as race, gender, age and income are not considered when determining who receives a transplant.

### **Q: Is there any cost to my estate or family for donating my organs, tissues and eyes?**

**A:** No. There are no costs to your estate or family for you to be a donor.

### **Q: What does my religion say about organ and tissue donation?**

**A:** Most religions approve of organ, tissue and eye donation and transplantation, and even encourage it. They believe it is the most significant gift one human being can give to another.