

Dear Friend,

Today, around 10,000 New Yorkers are waiting for life-changing gifts of organ, tissue and corneal donation, but the need far exceeds the supply. Providing more ways for people to become organ and tissue donors can save lives.

We passed Lauren's Law to make it easier to sign up as a donor through the Department of Motor Vehicles. You can also become a donor when you register to vote, or if you obtain health insurance through the NY State of Health Insurance Marketplace.

Deciding to become an organ donor is a personal decision. I hope this brochure helps answer your questions about organ donation. Please contact my office if I can be of further assistance in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,



Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly

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Organ donation...

It's a gift of life



Important information from Speaker of the Assembly Carl E. Heastie

A matter of life and death

There is a severe shortage of organs for lifesaving transplants. Almost 10,000 New Yorkers are currently waiting for an organ transplant to save their life. The need for organ donations far exceeds the supply. Without these "gifts of life," many New Yorkers die awaiting an organ that does not come in time.

The value of organ & tissue transplants

One organ donor can save up to eight lives and donating tissue and corneas can help as many as 75 more.

Organ and tissue transplants give people a chance to resume full, productive lives. For example:

- A heart, pancreas, liver, lung or intestine transplant can save lives.
- A kidney can free a person from dialysis treatments needed to sustain life.
- Corneas can give someone sight.
- Donated bone can prevent amputation in patients suffering from cancer.
- Tendons and cartilage can replace tissue lost or injured due to trauma, disease or infection.
- Donated skin may be used to help save the lives of severe burn victims.

Which organs and tissues can be donated?

- Heart valves; heart with connective tissue
- Liver/ilic vessels
- Kidneys
- Pancreas (with iliac vessel)
- Intestines
- Veins
- Lungs
- Corneas
- Skin
- Bone and connective tissue

Easy ways to sign up to be a donor

Anyone 16 years of age or older can sign up with the Donate Life Registry by one of the following ways:

1. Go directly to www.donatelife.ny.gov to enroll online. You can also download forms at www.donatelife.ny.gov/download-forms and send it via email to registry@donatelife.ny.gov or by postal mail.
2. Register as a donor when you obtain or renew your learner's permit, driver's license or non-driver ID in New York

Information included in this brochure provided by the New York State Department of Health; the Albany, NY-based Center for Donation & Transplant; LiveOnNY; and the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network.

State. Sign the donor box on the form or go to www.dmv.ny.gov/more-info/register-become-organ-eye-or-tissue-donor.

3. You can sign up to be a donor on your Voter Registration Form. The form will be automatically forwarded to the Donate Life Registry. For information on registering to vote, go to www.elections.ny.gov or contact your local Board of Elections.
4. Additionally, you can register when obtaining health insurance through the NY State of Health Insurance Marketplace.

If you change your mind, you can modify your gift or take your name off the Donate Life Registry at any time. Visit donatelifeny.gov or call 1-866-NY-DONOR (1-866-693-6667) for more information.

Next of kin

When no donate life directive is in place at the time of death, established medical procedures require a request for donation be made of the next of kin. In order of priority, legal next of kin are:

- Your health care agent
- Your spouse if you are not legally separated, or your domestic partner
- A son or daughter 18 or older
- Either of your parents
- A brother or sister 18 or older
- A guardian appointed by the court prior to the donor's death

Questions and answers about organ donation

Q. Who manages organ distribution?

The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) maintains the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN). Through the UNOS computer system, organ donors are matched to waiting recipients 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Q. What will happen to my donated organs and tissues?

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

Q. Will my medical treatment suffer if I am a donor?

Many individuals fear that once they are declared donors, their own medical treatment in a hospital will suffer because their doctor will be more interested in their organs than in saving their life. This is simply not true. Organ donation is considered only after every attempt has been made to save the life of the patient.

Q. Will my body be disfigured in any way?

Another frequent concern is disfigurement. The answer is no. There is no disfigurement. A highly skilled surgical team will remove the organs and tissues in the hospital, leaving the body intact for burial arrangements.

Q. Will my family have to pay a fee if I donate my organs?

Absolutely not. Under federal guidelines and state law, the donor's family is never billed for any costs related to organ donation.

Q. What is the difference between the Life Pass It On Registry and the Donate Life Registry?

The Life Pass It On Registry was established in 1999 to record someone's intentions to be an organ, eye and tissue donor. This intent registry requires the next of kin's permission for donation to proceed in the event of the prospective donor's death.

In 2006, a new law created the Donate Life Registry, which records an individual's own legal consent to organ, tissue and eye donation upon their death. If you are registered, your family will be informed of your decisions, but their permission is not required to proceed with your donation. If you are 16 or 17 years of age you may enroll, but parents or legal guardians have the final say in organ, eye or tissue donation.

If you are enrolled in the Life Pass It On intent registry, your enrollment is not automatically included in the Donate Life consent registry. To ensure that your decision to be a donor is honored, you must enroll in the Donate Life Registry.