



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **STATEWIDE CAMPAIGN TO REGISTER ILLINOISANS AS ORGAN & TISSUE DONORS SURPASSES 3.5 MILLION GOAL**

*Donate Life Illinois sets new goal of reaching 5 million registrations by April 30, 2009*

CHICAGO – Donate Life Illinois, the coalition of agencies responsible for organ, tissue, eye, blood and marrow donation, as well as donor registration and education in Illinois, today announced that they have surpassed their initial goal of registering 3.5 million Illinoisans in the state's new organ/tissue donor registry.

Since January 2007, Donate Life Illinois has been urging Illinois residents to take 30 seconds to register as donors and help the 4,700 Illinoisans currently waiting for a lifesaving transplant.

"We're proud to have signed up over 3.5 million Illinoisans to the organ and tissue program," said Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White. "There's still more work to be done. Remember if you signed up prior to January 1, 2006, you must re-register to make sure your wish is honored. The more people we register, the more lives we can save."

To reach their goal, Donate Life Illinois coalition members and volunteers hosted registration drives and conducted extensive outreach at workplaces, colleges, hospitals and in communities throughout Illinois. In the process, more than 165 employers joined the lifesaving campaign as Workplace Partners, and student groups from 20 Illinois colleges and universities participated in the Campus Campaign.

Donate Life Illinois also established a large online presence, building a vast network of supporters through various social media tools including the campaign blog, MySpace, Facebook and YouTube. To complement their campaign efforts, Donate Life Illinois ran a series of CTA ads featuring recipients and supporters to increase awareness of the new registry and the need to re-register.

"Surpassing this registration goal is a fantastic accomplishment," said Dave Bosch, chair of Donate Life Illinois. "It's a testament to the hard work and passion of all our coalition partners in making the campaign a success, and ultimately, a powerful movement by Illinois residents to act on designating their desire to help save lives."

In the year ahead, Donate Life Illinois will continue their outreach efforts and focus on their new campaign goal of registering 5 million Illinois residents in the state's new registry by April 30, 2009.

More than 300 patients at Illinois' nine transplant centers die each year waiting for organ donations. Illinois established its new "first person consent" donor registry Jan. 1, 2006, to help save more of those lives by ensuring that a person's end-of-life wish to donate is honored and cannot be overridden at the time of death.

(MORE)

Under Illinois' previous "donor intent" registry, additional consent was required from family members or other legal authority for donation to take place. Potential donors' wishes were overridden nearly 20% of the time—had those wishes been carried out, more than 100 lifesaving organ transplants could have taken place each year.

***Signing the back of your license no longer makes you a donor in Illinois.***

Illinoisans need to join the new donor registry by visiting the Donate Life Illinois' website at [www.DonateLifeIllinois.org](http://www.DonateLifeIllinois.org); visiting any Illinois state driver's license facility; or by calling the Illinois Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program at 800/210-2106.

To learn more about organ, tissue, eye and blood donation, visit [www.DonateLifeIllinois.org](http://www.DonateLifeIllinois.org) or contact Donate Life Illinois at 888/307-DON8 (3668).

**About Donate Life Illinois**

Donate Life Illinois is the coalition of agencies responsible for organ, tissue, eye and blood donation, as well as donor registration and education in Illinois. It is one of 45 regional coalitions and 50 national businesses or associations making up Donate Life America, a not-for-profit alliance that serves as a national voice and inspires all people to save and enhance lives through organ, eye and tissue donation.

Donate Life Illinois member organizations include:

- American Liver Foundation-Illinois
- Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network
- Heartland Lions Eye Bank
- Illinois Coalition of Community Blood Centers
- Illinois Eye-Bank
- Illinois Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program
- LifeSource
- Mid-America Transplant Services
- Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation
- National Kidney Foundation of Illinois
- National Marrow Donor Program

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