



Voice Of The People

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Thousands of people waiting for organs

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I am writing to commend Heidi Terry-Litchfield on her November 14 article, "Donor Sabbath aiming to bring transplant discussion to church."

In her article, Ms. Litchfield calls attention to Rev. W.E. Dewey of Trinity Lutheran Church and his effort to inform his congregation about the importance of organ and tissue donation during National Donor Sabbath. I wanted to take a moment to correct Rev. Dewey's statement that your family is ultimately responsible for carrying out your wish to be a donor.

In Illinois, this is not always the case. On Jan. 1, 2006, Secretary of State Jesse White helped Illinois become the 43rd state to establish a first-person consent registry. This registry was created due to 20% of families overturning the decision of a loved one's desire to be a donor in the past.

The new registry will help save hundreds of more lives each year, but Illinois residents need to re-register after Jan. 1, 2006 to join and ensure their wishes to be a donor are honored. Last month, the national transplant waiting list crossed the 100,000 mark for the first time ever. In addition, more than 4,700 Illinois residents currently await lifesaving transplants. Together, we can all make a difference in these lives by taking a moment to register. Gift of Hope is currently working diligently with a coalition of donation agencies to register 5 million Illinois residents in the state's donor consent registry by April 30, 2009.

Please take 30 seconds today to register at www.DonateLifeIllinois.org. It could be the most important moment of your day-and someday, someone else's life.