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Save up to 25 lives in under one minute

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Where to sign up

-Secretary of State's Web site, www.LifeGoesOn.com

-Donate Life Illinois' Web site, www.IamAreYou.org

-DeKalb Driver's License Bureau: 1360 Oakwood Ave. Contact:
815-756-7781

-PRSSA's organ/tissue donor registry and blood drive: April 25, 1 to 5 p.m. at the Rec

Thirty seconds is all it takes to sign up to save a life.

April is National Donate Life Month, and the campaign to register Illinois residents in the state's new organ/tissue donor registry is going strong.

"One donor can save up to 25 lives," said Jeff Slutz, Donate Life Illinois campus campaign manager. "It really is the ultimate form of giving."

Anyone 18 years or older can register, and health and age are not issues.

"There is no harm in signing up," Slutz said. "People should let the doctors decide who the suitable donors are."

The First-Person Consent Law came into effect in Illinois on Jan. 1, 2006. In the event of death, this law states that the consent of family members or legal next of kin is not required for organ/tissue donation from registered donors.

Donors who registered prior to this date should re-register to maintain their status.

"Illinois is the 43rd state to do it," Slutz said. "Before this passed, we saw 20 percent of donors have their wishes overturned by family members. Now, if you join the registry, it becomes legally binding."

More than 4,700 Illinoisans are currently awaiting transplants. Nationwide, 95,000 people wait. In Illinois alone, 300 people died last year from lack of available organs, said Dave Bosch, communications director for Gift of Hope.

"The worst part is it doesn't have to happen," Bosch said. "It's a health care crisis we have the solution to."

Accepted organs include the heart, kidneys, lungs, liver, pancreas and various tissues. Bosch said certain factors determine the order in which people receive transplants.

"Most important is blood type and body size," Bosch said. "It's also a matter of location, medical urgency and the length of time spent on the waiting list."