To: Local Newspapers

From: Central Michigan District Health Department

RE: Gift of Life Donation

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Life-Giving Donations: Better to Give and Receive

In the United States, someone is in need of blood every two seconds. It is estimated that 40,000 units of blood are used a day, and 4.8 million Americans would die without life saving blood transfusions each year. Unfortunately, these donations are often in short supply since only a fraction of those who can donate do so. An individual in good health, weighs 110lbs. or more, and is 17 or older, can donate blood every 56 days (8 weeks). Contact the Red Cross at www.redcross.org or 1-800-REDCROSS (1-800-733-2767) to find a local chapter and see if you meet the requirements to donate blood for their upcoming blood drives.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, as of January 2009, there were over 100,000 people on the waiting list for an organ transplant. There were a total of just over 23,000 organ transplants from January to October 2008; however, only 11,813 donations were received during that same time period. It is clear why donations are in such critical need. By donating organs, tissues, and blood, one person can give another person the gift of life.

Donors can be living or deceased. After donating a certain organ, or part of an organ, a person can still lead a completely normal life. Becoming a living donor is extremely commendable because of the second chance at life it provides to a person in need. While still alive, deceased donors have predetermined that they would give someone the gift of life. For those considering becoming a deceased donor, the following list may help answer any concerns:
• There is no age limit on donations; physical health and health of the organs/tissues are decided on by physicians and are the determining factor if they can be used.
• The organ transplant waiting list does not regard wealth or social status; but focuses on blood type, severity of illness, length of time spent on the waiting list, and other such factors.
• By law, the medical team treating you has to be separate from the transplant team, so every effort is made to save your life.

Signing up to donate your organs is very simple. One place that you can designate if you want to donate to save lives is on the back of your driver’s license. You can also join the Gift of Life, Michigan’s donor registry by visiting: www.giftoflifemichigan.org or by calling 1-800-482-4881.

One can even donate their entire body for medical research for future generations. After signing up to donate, you need to notify a family member or close friend in order to be a witness. This person may also be asked to sign a consent form before the donation can take place.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department which serves the residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties.


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