To: News Media

From: Central Michigan District Health Department

RE: Gift of Life Donation

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Life-Giving Donations: Better to Give and Receive

Almost everyone, at some point in their lives, depends upon donated blood. Unfortunately, these donations are often in short supply since only a fraction of those who can donate do so. Every two seconds someone in the United States needs blood. It is estimated that 38,000 units of blood are used a day. In a given year, 14 million blood transfusions are needed, thus why blood donation is so important. A person in good health, who weighs 110 lbs. or more, and is 17 or older, can donate blood every 56 days (8 weeks). Contact the Red Cross at www.redcross.org 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 February 20, 2008, there were over 98,000 people on the waiting list for an organ transplant. Because organ transplant sounds unfeeling, we will say they are on the waiting list for the gift of life. From January to November 2007, there were a total of just over 26,000 organ transplants; however, during that same
time period there were only 13,228 donations. It is clear why donations are in such critical need.

Donating organs, tissues, and blood is a wonderful opportunity; it is a second chance at life.

There are living and deceased donors. A person can lead a normal life even when they donate a certain organ or part of an organ. These living donors are exemplary. Deceased donors are people who when living, have chosen to give someone else a second chance if they die. When this article was written there were seven obituaries in a local paper. For those considering becoming a deceased donor, here is a list to help clear the air on concerns or issues you might have:

- 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 really simple. On the back of your driver’s license is one place that you can designate if you want to donate to save lives. There is also a website, www.tsm-giftroflife.org/RegistryCard.Asp, where you can join Gift of Life Michigan’s donor registry. One can even donate their entire body for medical research for future generations. Once you sign up to donate, you will want to notify your family or a close friend since you will need a witness to sign your driver’s license and your family may 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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