

## Organ procurement organizations' regional telephone numbers

Albany Area  
800-256-7811

Rochester/Syracuse Area  
800-810-5494

New York City/Metropolitan Area  
800-443-8469

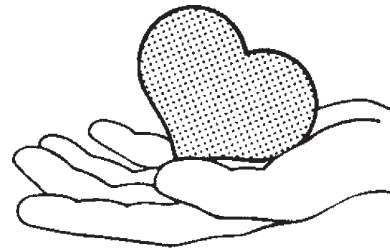
Upstate NY Transplant Services  
800-227-4771

**NYS Department of Health  
Donate Life Organ and Tissue  
Donor Registry**  
866-693-6667

**Website**  
[www.health.ny.gov/donatelife](http://www.health.ny.gov/donatelife)

*Information included in this brochure provided by the New York State Department of Health, the Albany, NY-based Center for Donation & Transplant, the National Women's Health Information Center, which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the New York Organ Donor Network and the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network.*

# Organ donation... It's a gift of life



*Deciding to become an organ donor is a personal decision*

## Important information from

Assemblyman  
Al Stirpe  
[www.assembly.state.ny.us](http://www.assembly.state.ny.us)

Updated 4/13

## From the desk of...

Assemblyman  
**Al Stirpe**

Dear Friend,

Today, organ and tissue transplants have gone from experimental procedures to the treatment of choice for thousands of people suffering from diseases that threaten their lives.

The state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the state Department of Health (DOH) teamed up with organ procurement organizations to offer a statewide computerized organ and tissue donor registry of those who wish to donate their organs upon their death. New York State has also included organ donation on its health care proxy form and voter registration form.

Lauren's Law, passed by the Legislature in 2012, will further streamline organ donor registry on the Driver License or Non-Driver ID Card application form.

I hope this brochure helps to answer your questions about organ donation. Please contact my office if I can be of further assistance in this or any other matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Albert D. Stirpe Jr.".

**District Office:**  
7293 Buckley Road, Suite 201  
N. Syracuse, NY 13212  
315-452-1115

**Albany Office:**  
Room 656, LOB, Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4505

**Email**  
[stirpea@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:stirpea@assembly.state.ny.us)

## What can you do to help?

To register as a donor, the state established the NYS Donate Life Organ and Tissue Donor Registry, also known as the Donate Life Registry.

You can donate online, through the mail, at the DMV or Board of Elections. Contact the NYS Department of Health, [www.health.ny.gov/donatelife](http://www.health.ny.gov/donatelife) or 866-693-6667, for information about how to register. You have to be at least 18 years of age to register. Or you can visit [www.dmv.ny.gov](http://www.dmv.ny.gov) and sign up through MyDMV. Signing up with the registry is legally binding. To make changes in your enrollment information or remove your name from the registry, write to: New York State Department of Health, Organ Donation, 875 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206.

You can sign up when you obtain a driver's license or non-driver's ID card, or when you renew your driver's license by signing the donor box on each of these forms. Signing the back of your license does not enroll you in the New York State Donate Life Registry. You can also sign a uniform donor card from your local organ procurement organization, complete a NYS voter registration form or donate as part of the state's health care proxy form, which contains a person's end-of-life-care wishes.

At the time of death, when no donate life directive is in place, established medical procedures require a request for donation be made of the next-of-kin. In order of priority, legal next-of-kin are:

- Your health care agent
- Your spouse if you are not legally separated, or your domestic partner
- A son or daughter 18 or older
- Either of your parents
- A brother or sister 18 or older
- A guardian appointed by the court prior to the donor's death

## The value of organ & tissue transplants

An organ donor or tissue donor can save or enhance the lives of several people. For example:

- A kidney can free a person from dialysis treatments needed to sustain life.
- A heart, pancreas, liver, lung or intestine transplant can save lives.
- Corneas can give someone sight.
- Donated bone can prevent amputation in patients suffering from cancer.
- Tendons and cartilage can replace tissue lost or injured due to trauma, disease or infection.
- Donated skin may be used to help save the lives of severe burn victims.

### ORGAN DONOR UPDATE

You now have the option to register as an organ donor on your voter registration form. The new form is available at [www.elections.ny.gov](http://www.elections.ny.gov) or at local county boards of elections offices.

## Questions and answers about organ donation

### Q. What is the difference between the Life Pass It On Registry and the Donate Life Registry?

The Life Pass It On Registry\* was established in 1999 to record someone's intentions to be an organ, eye and tissue donor. This intent registry requires the next of kin's permission for donation to proceed in the event of the prospective donor's death.

In 2006, a new law created the Donate Life Registry, which is a registry that records an individual's own legal consent to organ, tissue and eye donation upon their death. If you are registered on this new registry, your family will be informed of your decisions, but their permission is not required to proceed with donation.

If you are enrolled in the Life Pass It On intent registry, your enrollment is not automatically included in the Donate Life consent registry. To ensure that your decision to be a donor is honored, you must enroll in the Donate Life Registry.

### Q. Who manages organ distribution?

The United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) maintains the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN). Through the UNOS computer system, organ donors are matched to waiting recipients 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

### Q. What will happen to my donated organs and tissues?

The local organ procurement organization, tissue bank or eye bank matches the donor's

organs, tissues and eyes, as specified in the registry, with people waiting for transplants. Patients who receive the donor's organs will be identified based upon many factors, including blood type and severity of illness. Factors such as race, gender, age and income are not considered when determining who receives a transplant.

### Q. Will my medical treatment suffer if I am a donor?

Many individuals fear that once they are declared donors, their own medical treatment in a hospital will suffer because their doctor will be more interested in their organs than in saving their life. This is simply not true. Organ donation is considered only after every attempt has been made to save the life of the patient.

### Q. Will my body be disfigured in any way?

Another frequent concern is disfigurement. The answer is no. There is no disfigurement. A highly skilled surgical team will remove the organs and tissues in the hospital, leaving the body intact for burial arrangements.

### Q. Will my family have to pay a fee if I donate my organs?

Absolutely not. Under federal guidelines and state law, the donor's family is never billed for any costs related to organ donation.

\*You can make a voluntary donation of \$1 to the Life Pass It On Trust Fund for research and educational projects promoting organ and tissue donation when you apply for a driver license or non-driver ID card.

## A matter of life and death

- One organ donor can save up to 8 lives, while a tissue donor can improve 12 or more lives by restoring eyesight, helping fight infections in burn patients and preventing disability.
- More than 10,000 New Yorkers wait for organ transplants. The need for organ donations far exceeds the supply.

## What organs and tissues can be donated?

- Heart valves; heart with connective tissue
- Liver/Iliac Vessels
- Kidneys
- Pancreas (with Iliac Vessel)
- Intestines
- Veins
- Lungs
- Corneas
- Skin
- Bone and connective tissue