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## **CALIFORNIA ORGAN & TISSUE DONOR REGISTRY CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY WITH DMV WITH 1.6 MILLION SIGN UPS;**

### **SPRING AD CAMPAIGN FOCUS ON MINORITIES PUSHES REGISTRATIONS UP 40% IN CENTRAL AND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA; Consent Rates Decline in Latino Populations**

**Oakland, CA, Jul. 9, 2007** – In the first year since the California Organ & Tissue Donor Registry linked up with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), more than 1.6 million Californians have signed up to give life as organ and/or tissue donors. That good news means that more lives can be saved through organ and tissue donation and transplantation.

Unfortunately, the news isn't all good. A special spring media campaign directed to Latino, African American, and Asian American communities, showed timely upswells during the advertising period. For example, registry sign-ups in the greater Bay Area spiked 48% in April and somewhat less (35%) in the Central Coast and Central Valley regions. Recent data indicate however, that consent for donation among Latinos is declining even though they comprise 33% of those patients who are waiting for a transplant.

"Sometimes it's human nature to think that one ad campaign will solve the problem when, in fact, this is still an urgent matter for the 20,000-plus people waiting for organ transplants in California," said Andres Lozano, Community Affairs Coordinator for the Transplant Network.

Lozano continued to say, "We've moved beyond simply raising public awareness about organ donation and now we're about getting people to sign-up on the Donate Life California registry. Each one of us can choose to be a donor and save lives. It's as simple as getting the facts and recording your decision."

"California has the unfortunate privilege of ranking first among all states in the number of waiting list candidates. In the entire U.S., our needs are clearly greatest," stated Bryan Stewart, newly elected president of Donate Life California, the non-profit organization created in 2004 to administer the donor registry. "More than two thirds of the 20,000 Californians waiting desperately for the gift of life are Latino, African American, or Asian American. In those communities, however, only 1% or 2% have signed up to become donors, compared with 5% in Caucasian communities. We must carry the message into these communities that the gift of life benefits them directly. We must help each other. Our needs are simply too great."

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According to George Valverde, director of the DMV, "We are so proud that this partnership is truly making a difference and saving lives. Through our involvement in this project, we've also come to know how the lives of employees in our own DMV family have been touched by organ donation. Some have donated organs to loved ones, received transplants themselves or are still in need of life-saving donations. On their behalf, and on behalf of all of those who find themselves in need, we look forward to doing our part to sign up 15 million donors by 2011."

The Transplant Network does extensive outreach to the minority community. One such effort is a partnership with *La Clinica* - a provider of healthcare services to the Latino community through its seven Bay Area locations. "Their staff has embraced our cause and we work together toward our mutual goal to improve health and save lives in the Latino community," said Andres Lozano. "We participate in their health fairs," Lozano continued, "...such as the one coming up on July 14<sup>th</sup> in Oakland's Fruitvale District."

Tragically, one-third of those currently waiting for life-saving organ transplants could die due to a shortage of donors. But Californians can change that by checking "Yes!" when they apply for or renew a drivers license or I.D. card or by signing up online at: [www.donateLIFEcalifornia.org](http://www.donateLIFEcalifornia.org). Every person who signs up on the Donate Life California Registry has the potential to save eight lives as an organ donor and improve up to 50 others as a tissue donor.

Donate Life California is a nonprofit, state-authorized organ and tissue donor registry, administered by California's four nonprofit, federally designated organ procurement organizations, each responsible for facilitating the donation process in the state: California Transplant Donor Network, Golden State Donor Services, Lifesharing and OneLegacy. As a state-authorized public service, the registry assures that all personal information is kept confidential and stored in a secure database, accessible only to authorized organ and tissue recovery personnel.

For more information about the Donate Life California Registry, the process, and how donation saves and improves lives, visit [www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/brochures/fast\\_facts/ffd134.htm](http://www.dmv.ca.gov/pubs/brochures/fast_facts/ffd134.htm), [www.donateLIFEcalifornia.org](http://www.donateLIFEcalifornia.org) or in Spanish at [www.doneVIDAcalifornia.org](http://www.doneVIDAcalifornia.org).



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