



Coalition on Donation

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NATIONAL DONOR SABBATH PROVIDES EMPOWERING OPPORTUNITY TO SAVE LIVES

Annual Observance Places Critical Focus on Saving African American Lives

Richmond, VA., October 24, 2005 – Nearly 90,000 people are awaiting a special gift this holiday season – the gift of life. It's a gift that Americans across the country are being encouraged to consider during National Donor Sabbath, a celebration of life focused on organ and tissue donation, taking place November 11 -13.

In the African American community, the need for organ donation has reached crisis proportions. While Blacks comprise 13% of the U.S. population, they represent 27% of individuals on the national transplant waiting list and 35% of patients waiting for a kidney transplant.

"Over the past decade, there has been a 166% increase in the number of African Americans waiting for organ transplants. As the waiting list for organs continues to grow each day, we need to educate our community about the pressing need for organs and tissue and help individuals acquire a greater degree of confidence in the organ procurement system," said Dr. Velma Scantlebury, director of kidney transplantation at the University of South Alabama Medical Center in Mobile.

Statistically, African Americans have the best chance of being matched for an organ transplant if the donor is also Black. Due to a lack of awareness and information about the necessary steps to take to donate, the lack of available organs often means longer waiting periods on transplant lists, years spent on dialysis and sometimes death. Just one donor can help save or enhance the lives of up to 50 people.

Every major religion in the United States supports organ, eye and tissue donation as one of the highest expressions of compassion and generosity. During National Donor Sabbath, traditionally celebrated the second weekend before Thanksgiving, houses of worship and faith-based communities around the country will join together to remind Americans of the critical need for organ and tissue donation, and inform them of the steps to take to make the commitment to donate.

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For more information on how to commit to becoming an organ and tissue donor in each state, visit www.donatelife.net or call 1-866-LETS-GIVE (1-866-538-7448).

About Coalition on Donation

Coalition on Donation is a not-for-profit alliance of national organizations and local coalitions across the United States, dedicated to inspiring all people to *Donate Life*SM through organ, eye and tissue donation.

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