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DMV, DONATE LIFE ANNOUNCE SEVEN MILLION REGISTERED ORGAN AND TISSUE DONORS IN CALIFORNIA

Oakland, Calif., Aug. 16, 2010 – The number of registered organ and tissue donors in California has reached the nation-leading seven million mark, it was announced jointly today by the California Department of Motor Vehicles and Donate Life California.

The number of registered donors is especially important in the face of the disproportionate need for donated organs in California. Of the more than 107,000 patients currently listed on the National Organ Transplant Waiting List more than 21,000 (nearly 21 percent), live in the state.

“It was only four years ago that DMV and Donate Life California teamed up for this effort by making donor registration available to every Californian who renews their driver license or I.D. card. Our team effort has been a great success in reaching this milestone, but there are millions more out there who still need to check “Yes!” and potentially save someone’s life,” added DMV Director George Valverde.

Although Donate Life California has more registered donors than any other state donor registry, when offered the opportunity to register as donors a relatively low percentage of Californians choose to do so. In 2009, only 26 percent of DMV customers applying for or renewing their drivers’ licenses and ID cards checked ‘Yes’ on their forms to register as donors, ranking in the bottom fifth. In addition, of 26 million licensed drivers and ID holders, only 27 percent have signed up to be organ and tissue donors. In Los Angeles County, the number is even lower, with only 18 percent of county residents age 15 and older enrolled as donors.

Despite the state’s lower donor registration rates, the Donate Life California Registry plays an increasingly essential role in saving and healing Californians in need of organ and tissue transplants. Since the registry was introduced in April 2005, donors who had registered prior to death have saved more than 1,000 lives through organ donation and healed more than 35,000 through cornea and tissue donation. In 2009 alone, 134 registered organ donors and 414 registered tissue donors gave the gift of life through the state’s organ and tissue recovery organizations.

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“We encourage Californians to check ‘Yes’ to be a donor every time they apply for or renew their license,” said Bryan Stewart, president of Donate Life California. “Checking ‘Yes’ at the DMV could make all the difference in the world to someone whose only hope for survival relies on another’s compassion.”

The Donate Life California Registry continues to grow rapidly, adding more than 30,000 donors each week through the DMV’s driver license and ID card application and renewal process. This pace of growth is projected to continue through July 2011, when the registry completes its first five-year DMV renewal cycle.

Donate Life California is the nonprofit, state-authorized organ and tissue donor registry which records the decision to donate in a secure, confidential database that is searched by authorized organ and tissue recovery personnel at the time of an actual donation opportunity. It is administered by California’s four nonprofit, federally designated organ recovery organizations: California Transplant Donor Network, Golden State Donor Services, Lifesharing and OneLegacy.

For more information, please visit <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/about/donateLife/donateLife.htm>, www.donateLIFEcalifornia.org or in Spanish at www.doneVIDAcalifornia.org.

Percentage of Population Registered Among California’s 15 Largest Counties

	Designated Donors [1]	Licensed Drivers [2]	Pct.	Pop. 15+, 2009 [3]	Pct.	Residents on U.S. Organ Transplant Waiting List, [4]
Alameda County	310,378	986,580	31.5%	1,185,283	26.2%	1,413
Contra Costa County	239,071	708,222	33.8%	825,843	28.9%	909
Fresno County	134,848	510,774	26.4%	685,047	19.7%	920
Kern County	136,121	458,819	29.7%	601,812	22.6%	259
Los Angeles County	1,387,518	5,945,108	23.3%	7,768,464	17.9%	4,188
Orange County	579,909	2,023,150	28.7%	2,378,495	24.4%	1,028
Riverside County	363,981	1,286,740	28.3%	1,616,736	22.5%	947
Sacramento County	309,780	912,951	33.9%	1,094,973	28.3%	864
San Bernardino County	338,318	1,211,272	27.9%	1,530,439	22.1%	893
San Diego County	722,737	2,105,659	34.3%	2,379,693	30.4%	1,138
San Francisco County	195,854	534,852	36.6%	706,807	27.7%	844
San Joaquin County	109,569	399,977	27.4%	512,172	21.4%	582
San Mateo County	155,080	496,846	31.2%	578,956	26.8%	622
Santa Clara County	340,919	1,208,564	28.2%	1,404,577	24.3%	1,484
Ventura County	172,967	551,997	31.3%	628,896	27.5%	291

Sources: [1] Donate Life California data as of 7/31/10; [2] U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration; [3] U.S. Census Bureau; [4] OPTN data as of 1/30/10