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**DONATE LIFE CALIFORNIA TO CELEBRATE
100 MILLION ORGAN AND TISSUE DONORS NOW REGISTERED IN THE U.S**

California Leads Nation with Number of Registered Donors

Press Conference Tues., Oct. 11, 10:30 a.m. at DMV Headquarters

SACRAMENTO, CALIF., Oct. 11, 2011 – [Donate Life California \(DLC\)](#) will honor the [California Department of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](#) in celebration of today's announcement by [Donate Life America \(DLA\)](#) that a goal set by the donation and transplant community in 2006 has been achieved. There are now 100 million registered organ, eye and tissue donors as reported through state donor registries in the United States, that is roughly 42 percent of the adult population in the country. California, with more than 8.6 million registered organ and tissue donors, has more registered donors than any other state. Since Oct. 2006, when 65 million donors were registered and the goal of 100 million was set, California has contributed 25 percent of the 35 million registrants needed to reach the national goal.

The surge in registrations on the Donate Life California Organ & Tissue Donor Registry is due predominately to continuing education about donation and the convenience for Californians to sign up as donors at the same time that they apply for or renew driver licenses or I.D. cards at the DMV. Since 2006, 94 percent of all donor registrations in California have occurred as a direct result of the DMV and Donate Life California Registry partnership.

"As we celebrate this achievement, the need for transplants continues to grow," said Charlene Zettel, chief executive officer of Donate Life California, the non-profit organization created in 2004 to administer the state-authorized donor registry. "More than 112,000 men, women and children nationwide are awaiting a lifesaving organ transplant today. Of those waiting on the national transplant, list more than 21,000 (nearly 21 percent) are Californians."

Zettel went on to say, "Last year in the U.S., more than 28,000 people received organ transplants, more than 40,000 received corneal transplants and hundreds of thousands received tissue transplants, and yet 6,590 died awaiting organ transplants. Every time Californians check "Yes" to register as donors when they apply for or renew their driver license or identification card, they are potentially saving lives."

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. Of the 26 million licensed drivers and ID holders in California, only 30 percent have signed up to be organ and tissue donors, which means that 70 percent of Californians have not yet made the decision to designate themselves as donors.

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“We are hopeful that those percentages will improve with the future passage of AB 1118, which calls for 9th and 10th grade high school health classes to include donation education,” Zettel stated. “Now that Californian drivers are required to answer if they would like to add their name to the donor registry every time they fill out their driver license application, we owe it to our young people to educate them regarding donation, so that they can make an informed decision.”

The milestone of 100 million registered donors will be marked by a press conference at the DMV Headquarters Quad, 2415 First Avenue in Sacramento, on Tues., Oct. 11 at 10:30 am. Participants at the conference will include DMV Director George Valverde, Lisa Stocks president of DLC, Natasha Deegan, liver recipient, and Brenda O'Donnell whose father was an organ and tissue donor, along with other transplant recipients and donor family members.

“We are extremely proud of our participation in this life saving campaign and join in the celebration of this very important milestone,” said Director Valverde. “Without forgetting that this is just the beginning, we will continue to use every possible avenue at our disposal in an effort to increase the number of organ, tissue and eye donors in California.”

As the donation and transplant community celebrates this national goal of 100 million registered donors work has already begun to reach a new national goal, that of registering 20 million new donors by the end of 2012. Countless lives can be saved each year by registering 20 million additional donors nationwide.

“One of the greatest thrills of being a legislator is seeing your work come to fruition,” said Congresswoman Jackie Speier (CA-12). “As Donate Life America announces it has registered 100 million donors nationwide, I have 8.6 million reasons of my own to be proud of the law I was privileged to author in California. I thank the nearly nine million Californians who have signed up to be organ and tissue donors.”

Speier went on to say, “Clearly, the spirit of America shines brightest after a disaster. Whether it was 9/11 or Katrina, or some catastrophe overseas, we have always been a nation that gives freely. This spirit of saving others is at the heart of the success behind Donate Life America and Donate Life California. One person alone can save up to eight lives and improve the lives of 50 others by deciding to be an organ and tissue donor.”

Donate Life California administers the nonprofit, state-authorized organ and tissue donor registry with the support of California’s four nonprofit, federally-designated organ recovery agencies: 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 Donor & Tissue Registry, the process, and how donation saves and improves lives, please visit <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/about/donateLife/donateLife.htm>, www.donateLIFEcalifornia.org or in Spanish at www.doneVIDAcalifornia.org.

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