Organ Donation Increases, But Still Not Enough

According to a new survey by Donate Life America, 43 percent of people are undecided, reluctant or do not wish to have their organs and tissue donated after their deaths. While an improvement over findings from a similar survey last year in which 50 percent reported the same, the statistic illustrates a need to continue to increase the level of support for organ donation.

There are more than 105,000 adults and children on the transplant waiting list in the U.S., 18 of whom die each day while waiting.

Among respondents who report being registered donors, the reason provided by more than half (53 percent) is to help others in need. For the undecided, reluctant or those who do not wish to have their organs and tissue donated, the most common reasons were not being sure they'd be acceptable donors (19 percent), haven't decided (15 percent) and want to keep their organs and be buried whole (eight percent).

April is National Donate Life month and Donate Life America is encouraging people to visit www.donatelife.net [1]or www.facebook.com/donatelife [2] to learn more and to register.

The online survey also uncovered some pervasive myths regarding donation. For example, the majority (52 percent) of respondents were open to the idea that doctors may not try as hard to save their lives if their wish to be organ donors is known, and 61 percent are open to the idea that it is possible for a brain dead person to recover from his or her injuries. In addition, eight percent believe that organ or tissue donation is against their religion.

“It's important for people to know the facts,” says David Fleming, president and CEO, Donate Life America. “For health professionals, the number one priority is always to save the lives of their patients, and only after death is organ and tissue donation considered. While you can recover from comas, brain death is permanent, irreparable. And, there are no known religions in the U.S. with a position against donation. Rather, all major religions support organ donation as one of the highest expressions of compassion and generosity.”

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