

Donor Awareness Council

Promoting Organ and Tissue Donation in Colorado and Wyoming

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DRIVING DONORS TO REGISTER

Donor Awareness Council and Division of Motor Vehicles announce new collaboration to educate drivers about organ and tissue donation; “Show Us Your Heart” pilot program includes new posters designed by mother of Emily Keyes

(DENVER, CO) – A new collaborative pilot program developed by the Donor Awareness Council and the Colorado Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) aims to educate drivers about their option to register as an organ and tissue donor at state DMV offices. The “Show Us Your Heart” program includes a special poster featuring Emily Keyes, the student who was killed by a gunman at Platte Canyon High School and who donated a cornea to Julius Britto, a North Carolina man who received the gift of sight from Emily. Emily’s mother, Ellen Stoddard-Keyes, designed the poster.

Despite the fact that Colorado ranks second in the country for the percentage of drivers (61 percent) deciding to register as an organ and tissue donor at Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offices, a significant segment of the population is not aware of or does not understand the large unmet need for organ and tissue transplants, according to a new report released by the Donor Awareness Council. In response, the donor awareness community is working with the DMV on the pilot program designed to change the attitudes that prevent people from registering.

“DMV employees have enjoyed a very positive relationship with the Donor Awareness Council for the past five years, said DMV operations director Roni White. “This new program will allow us to encourage even more drivers to say ‘yes’ to organ and tissue donation when they get their Colorado license.”

The report found that:

- 95% of non-registrants were comfortable with others donating and 90% of that group said they would be comfortable if an immediate family member donated
- Many non-registrants were surprised when DMV staff asked if they wanted to register as an organ and tissue donor
- Nearly 30% of people who intend to donate but have not registered expect family members to carry out their wish to donate
- A majority of those not registered simply do not intend to donate; many have not thought about it and others mistakenly believe age and health issues prevent them from donating

The 2007 “State of Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation” report was released by the Denver-based nonprofit Donor Awareness Council, a coalition of 12 member organizations dedicated to increasing public awareness about organ, tissue, eye, blood and bone marrow donation in Colorado and Wyoming. In 2006, 115 individuals donated organs, 767 individuals donated tissue and 1350 individuals donated eye tissue in Colorado and Wyoming. Local organ donors saved a total of 343 lives. Each organ donor can save up to eight lives. An individual tissue donor can help 50 to 100 people. The report -- which includes the latest donation statistics for Colorado and Wyoming -- is available online at www.donor-awareness.org.

The “Show Us Your Heart” pilot program will begin at the DMV office at 1865 West Mississippi in Denver and will gradually expand statewide. It includes signage, educational materials and trainings for DMV employees.

“This report is a call to action,” said Charlene Hill, executive director of the Donor Awareness Council. “The need for organ and tissue donations far outstrips the number of registered donors. Our goal is to educate people and help them get the facts.”

The Donor Awareness Council is a nonprofit coalition formed in 1989 and is the only organization in Colorado and Wyoming whose sole mission is to increase donation through education and awareness. For more information call 303-388-8605 or visit www.donor-awareness.org.

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