

# The News-Gazette

## Reregister to become an organ and tissue donor

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A campaign is under way to expand a new online registry of organ and tissue donors in Illinois. Sign in and your decision becomes legally binding. No longer will another family member's consent be required. Long ago, the last time you took a driver's test or got your driver's license renewed at the Illinois secretary of state's office, you may have registered to become an organ or tissue donor.

What you may not know is that you need to reregister. Otherwise family members could still overrule your written desire to be an organ or tissue donor.

Based on a law that went into effect in Illinois more than a year ago, registration makes your decision to be a donor legally binding. Additional witnesses or family consent is no longer needed. A new registry at [www.IAmAreYou.org](http://www.IAmAreYou.org) allows Illinoisans to reregister online in less than 30 seconds. Once that is done, you've identified yourself as a potential donor for the rest of your life. But you can always remove your name later.

A recent statewide poll conducted for the privately operated Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network found that 87 percent of Illinois adults believe that organ donation is the right thing to do. Yet only about 1.5 million Illinoisans have signed onto the new registry. At one time there were 6 million Illinoisans on the old system, which made it the largest donor base in the country.

Virtually anyone who is over 18 years old can be an organ donor. Only people who have had an active cancer incidence in the last five years are prohibited from organ and tissue donation, but even those people can register. Many people live long lives after overcoming cancer, and they can become donors.

More than 4,600 Illinoisans are on waiting lists for organ transplants at the eight transplant hospitals in Illinois, and the list continues to grow. This is an appropriate week (Valentine's Day is Wednesday) to offer your heart and other organs - after you're through with them - to a stranger.