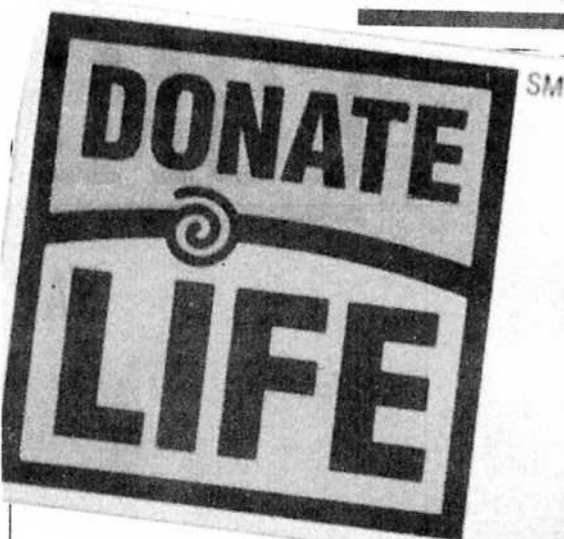


CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Friday, February 23, 2007

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



**I support
organ and
tissue
donation.**

FEATURED LETTER

—THOMAS DELANY JR./SUN-TIMES

Cure for organ shortage: More donations

I am writing in response to Sue Ontiveros' Feb. 17 column, "Giving young people dibs on organ transplant unfair." At the close of her column, Ontiveros nails the point when she writes: "Do we really want to start acting as judge and jury as to whose life is worth saving and whose isn't?" It is critically important that we focus on the need to increase organ donation to avoid these debates as much as possible in the first place.

The present organ matching system has done a great deal of good for many people. At the same time, the ongoing shortage of donated organs requires United Network of Organ Sharing to continue examining every opportunity to ensure scarce donated organs are allocated efficiently and effectively. UNOS has yet to decide whether and how age should factor into future organ allocation policy. The concept, which is just that — an idea and not a formal proposal

— remains under heavy debate.

Amid the national discussion, I urge your readers to again remember this critical point: The only true solution to the organ shortage is to have enough organs available to meet the need. Increased donation equates to increased transplants and decreased wait times.

If you live in Illinois and believe

*The organ matching
system has done a great
deal of good.*

you already are a registered organ/tissue donor, chances are you're wrong. A relatively new state law established a new donor registry through the office of Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White that requires anyone who registered before Jan. 1, 2006, to re-register. Six million Illinoisans signed up in the old registry, and

only 1.5 million have re-registered. All you have to do is visit www.IAmAreYou.org and take literally 30 seconds to register.

We recently conducted a statewide poll in which 90 percent of Illinoisans agreed that signing up for organ donation was "the right thing to do," but only 40 percent had actually registered. Fewer still were aware of the new registry and the need to re-register.

In response to the poll and the growing transplant list — now nearly 4,700 patients at Illinois' eight transplant centers — we are part of a coalition of Illinois agencies working to increase donations and decrease wait-list times. As Donate Life Illinois, we have launched a campaign to register 3.5 million Illinoisans in the next year and a half.

Jarold A. Anderson,
president/CEO,
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& Tissue Donor Network,
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