



## Local News

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### **Group Aims To Increase Organ Donation In Illinois**

While a recent poll has shown that nearly 90 percent of Illinois residents believe that registering to become an organ and tissue donor is the "right thing to do," 40 percent of Illinoisans have not registered.

That is according to Donate Life Illinois, a group undertaking an 18-month campaign to encourage at least 3.5 million Illinois residents to register in the state's new organ and tissue donor registry by April 2008.

The campaign is part of a national effort through Donate Life America to increase to 100 million the number of Americans who have taken action to become donors in their states. Donate Life America is an alliance of organizations from across the country that serves as the national voice to inspire all people to save and enhance lives through organ, eye and tissue donation, according to a release from the group.

Donate Life Illinois notes that in January 2006, Illinois law changed and a new donor registry was launched. Once someone joins the new registry, the new law ensures that their decision to donate will be honored.

Anyone who signed up to be an organ/tissue donor before January 1, 2006 needs to re-register in the new registry, the group says. The new donor registry is managed by the Secretary of State's office.

"The poll reinforced what we've observed for years in educating the public about donation," said David Bosch, Donate Life America president, "that most people procrastinate in documenting a decision. In addition, it suggests that a lot of people are willing to donate life provided we can tell them about the new registry."

The poll of 800 Illinois adults, conducted by Fako and Associates on behalf of Gift of Hope, found that 87 percent of Illinois adults believe donation is the right thing to do. The most likely demographic to register as donors are women under 50, the release said.

Donate Life Illinois launches this month with online communities through a campaign website at [www.IAmAreYou.org](http://www.IAmAreYou.org), a Donate Life Illinois blog and nearly 1,000 friends and advocates on MySpace.

In February and March, the campaign's partner agencies will train volunteers throughout the state on how to coordinate donor registration stations within their communities in time for National Donate Life Month in April.

Additionally, over the next three months, major employers throughout the state will be approached to take part by providing information to employees and hosting donor drives.

The Donate Life Illinois campaign is coordinated through the partner agencies responsible for organ, tissue and eye donation, donor education and the state donor registry in Illinois.

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