

Spring 2009

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The Nebraska Organ and Tissue Donor Registry, a First Person Consent Approach

Have you ever wondered just what that little red heart on your driver's license entails? What does it mean, and what can it do for others? Or maybe your driver's license doesn't have that little red heart, and you want to know how to get it there. The following is a history of the Nebraska Organ & Tissue Donor Registry and what it means to you.

As most people know by now, when you go to the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles to obtain or renew your driver's license, you will be asked three questions pertaining to organ donation.

1. **Would you like to register to be an Organ, Eye, and Tissue donor?**
2. **Would you like more information about Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donation?**
3. **Would you like to donate \$1 to Organ, Eye, and Tissue donation education?**

While all of these questions are optional, if you answer 'yes' to question number one listed above, you'll notice that when you get your driver's license there will be a small red heart in the lower right hand corner. This signifies your consent to be an organ donor upon your death.

The Nebraska Organ & Tissue Donor Registry was established as a way for individuals to express their wishes to be an organ donor upon their death. In 2003, legislation was passed linking the Department of Motor Vehicles database of registered donors with the Nebraska Organ Recovery System (NORS) official registry. In turn, this allowed NORS 24-hour access to a database of all registered donors in the state. Therefore when a hospital contacts NORS with a

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The mission of Nebraska Organ Recovery System is to maximize the recovery and quality of organs and tissues for transplantation while maintaining sensitivity, compassion and respect for people of all cultures.

We accomplish this by working in partnership with hospitals in the service area and by providing education to potential donor families, healthcare professionals and the public we serve.

Give the Most Precious Gift of All...

LIFE!



A Donate Life Organization

Nebraska Organ & Tissue Donor Registry Continued...

death, they are able to access that registry to see if the patient has consented to organ donation.

Also included in this legislation, was the legalization of First Person Consent for the State of Nebraska. With the passing of this law, your consent for organ donation on your driver's license became your legal informed consent. This is your way of taking one extra step to ensure your wishes are fulfilled upon your death and taking the burden of making such a decision off of your family.

With the passage of First Person Consent, the family no longer holds the power to override your decision to donate, NORS however will still work very closely with the potential donor's family to ensure that they continue to view donation in a positive light. Because of this NORS strongly encourages you to discuss your views on organ donation with your family now, so there are no misunderstandings in the future.

The need for organ and tissue donation is continually growing. The national transplant waiting list has exceeded 100,000 people, and each day 20 of these will die because they didn't get the life-saving organ they needed. Right now in Nebraska about 500 people wait for an organ to save their lives, while each year Nebraska averages only 35 donors. To join the registry or to learn more, visit us at www.nedonation.org.

Nebraska Organ Recovery chosen as Community Organization of the Night at Omaha Royals Game

The Omaha Royals have partnered with Thrivent Financial during their 2009 Baseball season to help promote local non-profit organizations. Nebraska Organ Recovery System has been selected as the Community Organization of the Night for the May 7th home game against Memphis.

We invite you join us as we work together with the Omaha Royals to promote organ and tissue donation throughout the night. An informational table will be displayed before and during the game, as well as an on-field and on-air interview promoting organ and tissue donation.

Tickets can be purchased at the gate, and we look forward to seeing you there!



First Quarter Donation Statistics

Statistics from 01/01/09 through 03/31/09

Hospital	Organ	Tissue
Alegent Hospice Care	0	1
Bergan Mercy Medical Center	1	2
Bryan LGH-East	0	4
Bryan LGH-West	2	4
Children's Hospital and Medical Center	2	0
Creighton University Medical Center	0	1
Faith Regional Medical Center	0	1
Good Samaritan Health System	1	5
Great Plains Medical Center	0	1
Harlan County Medical Center	0	1
Immanuel Medical Center	0	2
Jefferson Community Hospital	0	1
Jennie Melhalm Memorial Medical	0	1
Lakeside Hospital	0	4
Methodist Hospital	0	1
Midlands Hospital	0	2
Nebraska Heart Hospital	0	1
Nemaha County Health System	0	1
Ogallala Community Hospital	0	1
Omaha VA	0	1
Regional West Medical Center	1	2
Seward Memorial Hospital	0	1
St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center	2	3
The Nebraska Medical Center	2	2
Total	11	43

Need a Speaker for your next event?

Nebraska Organ Recovery System welcomes the opportunity to come and speak to your school, service group or community organization about the benefits and opportunities of organ and tissue donation. For more information or to arrange a speaker, contact Stephanie Lochmiller, Public Relations Coordinator at 402-733-1800, or email StephanieL@nedonation.org



April is National Donate Life Month!

April is National Donate Life Month (NDLM), and with it comes a host of activities designed to promote organ and tissue donation, and honor those who have given the Gift of Life.

Governor Dave Heineman kicked off NDLM by proclaiming April Donate Life Month in Nebraska. This also marked the beginning of the national initiative, Flags Across America. Be on the lookout for the National Donate Life flags being flown at hospitals, and government agencies across Nebraska as part of this project.

The goal of this event is to have a flag flown at every hospital, transplant center, and organ recovery agency nationwide. In years to come we hope the project grows to the point that each and every donor and recipient family fly a Donate Life flag during the month of April, to show that donation has touched their lives. To take part in this event and fly your own flag, visit the Donate Life store at www.donatelife.net.

The semi-annual Donor Family Reception will be held on April 19th at the LaVista Conference Center in Omaha. This year the welcome address will be given by Joann Schaefer, M.D. Chief Medical Officer; Director, Division of Public Health, Department of Health & Human Services, and Liver Recipient. The keynote speakers this year are donor parents Milt and Janet Bemis, and their son's liver recipient, Lily Allen.

To schedule a speaker, or to learn more about what you can do to promote organ and tissue donation during NDLM, visit www.nedonation.org. Be sure to check out the next addition of the NORS Newsletter to see full coverage of all the exciting events that took place during NDLM!



Nebraska Organ Recovery Achieves 1000th Donor

The month of March brought with it a milestone for Nebraska Organ Recovery System (NORS), when they achieved their 1000th organ donor. This achievement has resulted in more than 3000 organs transplanted and countless lives saved. Since its inception in 1977, NORS has recovered tissues from 1506 donors.

“This is an exciting milestone for us,” says Stephanie Lochmiller, spokesperson for Nebraska Organ Recovery System, “with a national transplant waiting list of over 100,000 people, we are continuing to do everything we can to raise awareness and increase organ donation.”

To learn more about organ, eye, and tissue donation, or to join the Nebraska Organ & Tissue Donor Registry, please visit our website at www.nedonation.org.



A Second Chance at Life

Heart Recipient Sara Prenosil's story, and second chance at life

It all began when Sarah was a baby. At five and a half months old, she suddenly went into respiratory arrest. The rescue squad rushed her to the hospital and a few days later she underwent open-heart surgery. Thus began a journey that included six other surgeries and more than a hundred visits to hospitals in Omaha, NE. In February 1999, Sara was diagnosed with Cardiomyopathy, a deterioration of the heart muscles that ultimately results in death. In April of 2000 Sarah, then 14 years old, was placed on the national waiting list for heart transplants. The Prenosil's were then told she might have to wait up to a year before a heart would become available.

After five months, on the evening of September 6th, 2000 the Prenosil's were finishing dinner when the pager sounded and seconds later the phone rang. It was the heart transplant coordinator from St. Louis. In less than an hour they notified family and friends, packed their clothes, drove to the airport and were headed for St. Louis. By 10 a.m. the following morning, Sarah's new heart was transplanted and was beating perfectly. Just six days later, Sarah was released from the hospital, completing her care as an outpatient. Two weeks later, the Prenosil's flew home to Omaha.

After the transplant, Sarah almost immediately started to gain more energy, and joined the high school swim team. As a senior, she swam the 400-meter relay for a team that was a tenth of a second shy of state competition. She also earned the gold medal twice at the National Transplant Games in 2002 in Orlando FL, and again in 2004 in Minneapolis, MN. She currently attends the University of Nebraska at Omaha and swam on UNO's Masters Swim Team. She competed in the 2005 US Masters Swimming Championships in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Then on September 24th, 2006 Sarah was inducted into the Nebraska high School Sports Hall of Fame for her swimming accomplishments despite her countless health obstacles.

Sarah is now a senior at UNO, majoring in Exercise Science, and works part time at Methodist Hospital. Over this past summer, her cardiology doctors found a 99% blockage in her left coronary artery during one of her regular check-ups. As a result, a stent was placed and was followed by four hospitalizations due to complications.

Despite the obstacles Sarah has encountered she doesn't let it get in the way of what she wants out of life. Sarah continues to be an advocate for organ and tissue donation and works with Nebraska Organ Recovery System as well as the Nebraska Organ and Tissue Donor Coalition.



Heart recipient, Sara Prenosil.

Upcoming Events

April- National Donate Life Month

April 16th- University of Nebraska-Omaha, National Organ Donor Awareness Campus Event 11-2 p.m.

April 19th- New Hearts Donor Family Reception, Omaha, NE

April 22nd- Alegent Lakeside Wellness Center Organ Donation Education Event (open to the public)

May 7th- Omaha Royals Community Organization of the Night, Rosenblatt Stadium

Give the Most Precious Gift of All... LIFE!



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