



NEWS RELEASE

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NJ SHARING NETWORK SETS RECORD FOR ORGANS DONATED IN 2015

Yet Scarcity of Organs Keeps 5,000 State Residents on Waiting List for Life-Saving Transplants

NEW PROVIDENCE, NJ, February 2, 2016 – NJ Sharing Network, the non-profit, federally designated organization responsible for the recovery of organs and tissue in the state, set a record in 2015 for making organ transplants possible, with a total of 531. This represents a 37 percent increase from 388 transplants in 2014. Tissue donation also reached an all-time high, with a seven percent increase from the prior year. Kidneys were the most commonly donated organs, followed by liver, heart, lungs, pancreas and intestines. Tissue donation includes: corneas, bone grafts, skin grafts, ligaments and heart valves. One organ and tissue donor can save up to eight lives and restore the quality of life for as many as 50 people.

“The number of transplants made possible in 2015 is a testament to the dedication of our staff. Our clinical employees perform at the highest level – including providing comprehensive support for our donor families – and our transplant laboratory continuously innovates to increase the number of lives we can save,” said Joe Roth, President and Chief

Executive Officer, NJ Sharing Network. "However, transplants would not be possible without donors who have made the decision to give the gift of life by registering and having a conversation with their families."

There are currently 5,000 New Jersey residents awaiting a life-saving transplant and more than 1,000 of them joined the transplant waiting list in 2015. Every day, approximately three people are added to the New Jersey waiting list, and last year 90 people died while waiting for a transplant. One third of the people waiting for a kidney transplant have been waiting for more than three years.

At the end of 2014, Bill Heinz of Sparta, New Jersey was dying from the emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease that were destroying his lungs. After four "false alarms" of potential transplants falling through, he underwent a successful transplant operation in August of 2015.

"A little more than a year ago I was on the organ transplant waiting list, hoping desperately for new lungs as my health rapidly deteriorated. Finally, I received a transplant and got a second chance at life," said Heinz. "I don't know who donated their lungs, but I do know that my family and I are eternally grateful and doing everything possible to raise awareness of the gift they shared. We won't rest until everyone knows about the dire need for organs in New Jersey and considers becoming a registered donor. It literally takes a minute to register online."

NJ Sharing Network's 2015 organ and tissue donation record high mirrors that of the nation: the number of organ transplants performed exceeded 30,000 for the first time in the United States, as reported by United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS), the organization that manages the nation's organ transplant system. While this milestone reflects lives saved and enhanced, there are still more than 122,000 people nationwide waiting for the gift of life. Approximately 95 percent of Americans say they support organ donation, yet only about 40 percent are registered donors.

To date, more than 2.5 million New Jersey residents have registered as organ and tissue donors. To learn more, get involved and register as an organ and tissue donor, visit www.NJSharingNetwork.org.

About NJ Sharing Network

NJ Sharing Network is a non-profit, federally designated organization responsible for the recovery and placement of donated organs and tissue for New Jersey residents in need of life-saving transplants. NJ Sharing Network partners with Donate Life America, a not-for-profit national alliance that drives communities to increase their numbers of registered donors. NJ Sharing Network honors those who gave, pays tribute to those who received, offers hope to those who continue to wait, and remembers the lives lost while waiting for the gift of life.

Register as an organ and tissue donor in just 60 seconds! NJ Sharing Network is the nation's first OPO to launch Donate Life America's new national, mobile-friendly registry. Visit our website and click "Register as an organ and tissue donor." Then share your decision with friends and family. Ninety-five percent of Americans favor organ donation. The new registry lets you say "Yes to Life!" with just a few clicks.