

**PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release**

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Over 50% Have Said “Yes” to Donating Life by Registering on Newly-Created S.C. Donor Registry

Charleston, SC - April 6, 2009: A total of 53% of South Carolinians who have obtained a driver's license/ID since the launch of the South Carolina Organ & Tissue Donor Registry have signed up to become organ/tissue donors. That is well above the national average of 38% and represents more than 93,000 South Carolinians who have said “yes” to be organ and tissue donors since the registry launch on Dec. 23, 2008.

April is designated as National **Donate Life** Month by Barack Obama, the President of the United States. LifePoint and Donate Life South Carolina are calling attention to the need for more people to sign up to become donors.

Prior to the S. C. Organ and Tissue Donor Registry launch, approximately 1.2 million South Carolinians had the red heart symbol on their driver's license/ID. The challenge now is to reach those people who may think they are already *registered* donors. The reality is the heart only symbolized an individual's *desire* to become a donor, but did not indicate *legal consent* or placement into a registry. The names of those who had previously indicated their desire to be donors could not be automatically transferred into the newly-created registry.

Individuals can register now by visiting www.Every11Minutes.org site and/or by obtaining, renewing, or changing their S.C. driver's license/ID at any SCDMV office. When registering through the SCDMV, a new logo representing legal consent will be placed on an individual's license/ID. It is a heart and "Y" surrounded by a circle with 11 "ticks" in it. The symbol and registry Web site name represent the fact that **every 11 minutes** another person is added to the national transplant waiting list.

New SCDMV Driver's License Donor Symbol:



During April, numerous hospitals in South Carolina will fly or display a Donate Life flag as part of a national initiative called “**Flags Across America**” in support of organ and tissue donation. Volunteers and staff will also work at numerous health fairs and other events to help educate the public and bring added awareness to the need for more donors. For information about those events or to schedule one in the future, the public is encouraged to visit www.lifepoint-sc.org or www.donatelifesc.org.

By registering to be an organ/tissue donor, consent is no longer required from any other person unless the donor is under the age of 18. For minors under the age of 18, the parent or legal guardian will also be required to consent at the time of donation.

Currently, over 101,000 people are on the national transplant waiting list and approximately 800 of them are on the South Carolina waiting list. Without more donors, many on the waiting list will die waiting. In fact, an average of 18 people die in the U.S. each day because of the shortage of life-saving organs.

Last year in South Carolina, 159 people became organ donors at their death and helped save over 481 lives. There were also 499 tissue donors and nearly 800 ocular (eye) donors. Nationally, 27,958 organ transplants were performed in 2008. Annually, there are more than 25,000 tissue and 70,000 cornea donations in the U. S. These donations saved or improved the lives of South Carolinians and people across the country.

For more information about *Donate Life* Month or the S.C. Organ and Tissue Donor Registry, contact: Mark Johnson, Media Relations Coordinator - LifePoint, at 1-800-462-0755 or 843-763-7755

About LifePoint

LifePoint is the designated Organ Procurement Organization (OPO) for organ recovery services in South Carolina. LifePoint actively provides organ, tissue and ocular donor services to 63 hospitals throughout the state. LifePoint also helps support and educate families at an emotionally devastating time, so they can make well-informed decisions about organ and tissue donation.

About Donate Life South Carolina

Donate Life South Carolina is the organization whose mission is to promote organ and tissue donation for transplantation and provide patient assistance for South Carolina transplant recipients. Donate Life South Carolina also maintains the South Carolina Donor Registry.

