PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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August Is Minority Donor Awareness Month

(Minorities Account for 65% of the S.C. Transplant Waiting List)

(Charleston, SC-July 19, 2010) In observance of ***Minority Donor Awareness Month*** in South Carolina and ***National Minority Donor Awareness Day***, Donate Life South Carolina & LifePoint join together to call attention to the staggering statistic that **every 11 minutes** another person is added to the national transplant waiting list. Over 900 people are on the South Carolina transplant waiting list in need of a life-saving organ. Sixty-five percent of those waiting for a transplant are minorities. African Americans account for nearly 600 (63%) of those on the list. The transplant waiting list grows to over 108,000 people nationally and over 30,000 (28%) of those waiting are African American. Hundreds of thousands more are in need of tissue transplants to restore their health, mobility, or sight.

According to 2008 U.S. Census estimates, African Americans account for 28% of South Carolina's population. However, since the launch of the South Carolina Organ and Tissue Donor Registry in 2008, African Americans are only 20% of the population that has registered to become organ/tissue donors in South Carolina. **Patients in need of a transplant are more likely to find a genetically compatible match within their own racial/ethnic group, particularly for kidneys and bone marrow. Therefore, increasing minority registrations and ultimately donations is critical.**

National Minority Donor Awareness Day is observed every August 1 to increase awareness of organ donation among African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander and Native American populations. The event also recognizes minority donors and their families. As we observe the 14th annual National Minority Donor Awareness Day, which was first recognized by President Clinton in 1996, we bring to light the continued critical need for donors and the strides made in increasing the number of designated donors. In South Carolina, we are also encouraging the minority community to observe Minority Donor Awareness throughout the entire month because of the great need in that community.

In December of 2008, South Carolina joined over 45 other states by establishing an official state registry for organ and tissue 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 heart on the SC Driver's license/ID only indicated intent to be a donor, but did not put individuals in a registry. Now, South Carolinians can register their legal consent to become a donor by visiting the website www.Every11Minutes.org or when obtaining, renewing or changing their license/ID through the SCDMV.

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:

Because the need for more organ and tissue donors is so great, African American community leaders are encouraged to discuss donation during ***Minority Donor Awareness Month*** and throughout the year. For more information about ***Minority Donor Awareness Month,*** to arrange an interview with a local donor family member and/or a transplant recipient, or simply learn more about organ/tissue donation, contact Mark Johnson, Media Relations Coordinator for LifePoint at 1-800-462-0755 or 843-763-7755 ext. 1056.

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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 62 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.

LifePoint, Inc.
Organ and Tissue Donation Services for SC

DONATE LIFE South Carolina