

## Ten tips to enhancing your organ & tissue donor program

Written by Tom Mone | February 01, 2017

It is a cold, hard fact that 22 people die unnecessarily every day in the United States waiting for an organ transplant. A great deal of the problem rests in the public's misconceptions about how to register to be a donor, what is involved in the process, and how the donor's body will be treated upon death.

America's hospitals have a crucial role to play in facilitating a thoughtful conversation with their staff, patients, families and communities on this topic. Here are ten things hospitals can do to help:

1. Educate their internal staff, particularly those closest to potential donor situations, to make sure they understand the issues surrounding donation and have access to the right information in a timely manner should the opportunity for a donation arise.
2. Educate the community on the importance of registering to be a donor and the fact that more than 119,000 of our fellow citizens are waiting to receive lifesaving hearts, livers, lungs, kidneys and pancreases but there are simply not enough donors to meet the growing demand.
3. Set up a donor registration table at all community health fairs, both on and off campus, as a way to not only encourage donation but to show your support for this cause.
4. Work with a local organ and tissue recovery organization to provide a community lecture on the topic, perhaps in conjunction with a physician on the medical staff.
5. Include articles about donation in their community, employee and medical staff newsletters (both print and online).
6. Set up a link on the hospital's website through which people can learn about and sign-up to be a donor. Or encourage individuals to register as a donor at the local department of motor vehicles or online at [www.donatelife.net](http://www.donatelife.net).
7. Work with the media to feature local recipients and tell the story of how one donor can save up to eight lives through organ donation and heal as many as 50-100 through tissue donation.
8. Deliver the important message that there is no inherent conflict between saving lives and using organs for transplant. The doctors who work to save a patient's life are not the same doctors involved with organ donation, and it is only after every attempt has been made to save a life that the appropriate medical professionals review the deceased's medical and social history to determine if they are a candidate for donation.
9. Talk about the joy and satisfaction that individuals and their families receive knowing how their unselfish act gives waiting recipients a second chance at life.
10. Lead by example and make organ donation a part of the hospital's "Healthier Communities" initiative.

*Tom Mone is Chief Executive Officer of Los Angeles based OneLegacy, the nation's largest organ, eye and tissue recovery organization.*