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National Gathering of Healthcare Leaders Focuses on Increasing Organ and Tissue Donation

(HENDERSON, Nev. – November 3, 2016) — Leading physicians, transplantation center executives and hospital thought leaders from across the country gathered in Henderson, Nevada, in an attempt to identify and adopt best practices that will increase the utilization of organs that could save the lives of thousands of people currently on the transplantation waiting list.

Variations in current practices combined with outdated polices have made the underutilization of these organs one of the most significant challenges facing the transplant industry today.

“Tragically 21 people die every day in the United States waiting for an organ transplant, and the national waiting list currently holds nearly 120,000 names,” said Tom Mone, chief executive officer of OneLegacy and chair of the Organ Donation and Transplantation Alliance, which sponsored the event. “It is critical that we identify best practices in organ placement, transplantation and outcomes monitoring in order to reduce and even end deaths on the waitlists.”

The Organ Donation and Transplantation Alliance, commonly known as The Alliance, is a nonprofit organization that carries on the work of the groundbreaking Donation and Transplantation Breakthrough Collaborative that helped increase donation 25 percent. By bringing together leadership from hospitals, transplantation and critical care medicine, as well as organ recovery organizations and associations, The Alliance works to ensure a continued national commitment to increasing organ donation and successful transplantation with the goal of ending deaths of those on transplant waitlists. The Alliance board brings together national leaders from each of the transplantation, hospital, organ recovery and oversight organizations that make donation and transplantation possible. These organizations engage subject-matter experts from their professional communities who identify innovative practices that increase lifesaving transplantation and improve outcomes.

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Last week's conference in Nevada was The Alliance's first National Critical Issues Forum that brought together 150 select leaders to tackle this challenge by addressing clinical, regulatory, logistical and reimbursement barriers that cause viable organs to be passed over. "Our goal was to identify opportunities to disrupt current practice patterns, expose effective and scalable practices that apply beyond a given region or demographic, and evaluate existing policies that impede organ utilization," said Mone. "By tapping into the combined experience of our 150 national leaders, we were able to learn from those who have implemented effective practices; and each of the participants left with a commitment to implement changes that once successfully piloted can be shared nationwide.

Mone said that the recommendations that came out of the forum will challenge many of the current practices, policies, regulations and reimbursement factors that have prompted the field to too often "make perfect the enemy of good." He said that "We need to find a better way of balancing the risk that always comes with a transplant with the risk of remaining on the list waiting for a 'more perfect organ.'"

As CEO of OneLegacy, Mone oversees the largest organ, eye and tissue recovery organization in the U.S. that enables 1,400 organ transplants and nearly a quarter million tissue transplants each year by serving more than 200 hospitals, 11 transplant centers, and a diverse population of nearly 20 million people throughout seven counties in Southern California. More information on OneLegacy or on becoming a donor is available at www.onelegacy.org.

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