



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



DMV and Health Commissioners Urge Vermonters to Say “Yes” to Organ Donation

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SOUTH BURLINGTON – Jim Carter, of Jericho, showed the red heart icon on his Vermont driver’s license that designates him as an organ donor on Tuesday at the Department of Motor Vehicles in South Burlington. Organ donation is a gift his daughter provided for six people after she died in a car crash in 1990. Andrea was 17 years old when she died and her kidneys, liver, heart and the corneas from her eyes were successfully transplanted.

“It was an incredible gift, and organ transplantation has an incredible success rate,” Carter said as he held up his license. “Anyone can donate. Age is not a factor.”

Carter joined Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD, Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner Robert Ide, Anthony DiCarlo, MD, a transplant surgeon at Fletcher Allen Healthcare, and Sally Hand, who is waiting for a kidney transplant, for an event to promote organ donation during the 10th annual Donate Life Month in Vermont.



Dr. Chen thanked all Vermonters as the number of registered organ donors in the state has nearly doubled from 18,648 in January to 31,958 through March. The Department of Motor Vehicles has streamlined the process for donation by asking anyone who gets or renews a license to complete a form that voluntarily designates them as a donor.

“In my 25 years as an emergency room physician, I saw how you can take something tragic and make it into something positive,” Dr. Chen said. “What better way to leave a legacy than to donate organs and give the gift of life.”

The vast majority of people (84%) in Vermont register to be an organ and tissue donor at the Department of Motor Vehicles. Dr. Chen commended the work of Commissioner Ide and his staff in facilitating the organ donation process.

In 2012, more than 640 lives were saved in New England because of the generosity of organ donors. Thousands more lives were enhanced through the gift of tissue donation.

Dr. DiCarlo said Vermont is a community known for its generosity and people in need of a transplant are, “hanging on for their lives. Checking ‘yes’ can save a life.”

The average wait for a kidney in Vermont is three to four years, according to Sally Hand, who said she has to sit through dialysis for four hours, three days each week as she awaits a new kidney and a suitable donor. The procedure leaves her weak and dizzy and she has to leave the hospital in a wheelchair. More than 117,000 patients nationally are now on the transplant wait list.

National Donate Life Month is an opportunity to celebrate the lives saved and enhanced through donation, honor the donors, and inspire others to do the same.

To register to be a donor or for more information visit DonateLifeVT.org

About Donate Life Vermont: Donate Life Vermont is a joint project of two federally designated organ procurement organizations that serve Vermont – Center for Donation and Transplant and New England Organ Bank. They have come together to create a fast and easy way for citizens of New England to register as organ and tissue donors in a secure and confidential manner. For more information, visit DonateLifeVT.org.

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