

# Media Release



For Immediate Release  
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## HISTORIC DAY IN ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

*Religious leaders of different faiths stand together*

### NEWS

Toronto - Religious leaders in the Greater Toronto Area united today at a prayer breakfast and affirmed their commitment to work with Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) to encourage Ontarians to register their consent to organ and tissue donation.

This is the first time multiple faith groups have come together on this topic with the provincial agency responsible for saving and improving the lives of Ontarians by planning, promoting, co-ordinating and supporting activities relating to the donation of organs and tissue for transplant.

### QUOTES

“Organ and tissue donation is a life and death issue for thousands of Ontarians” said Bas Balkissoon, MPP Scarborough--Rouge River and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. “It’s important that people of all faiths consider the gift of life that may be given when they register their consent to be a donor.”

“Organ and tissue donation and transplantation is an emblem of the values that weave us together as a society. Disease recognizes no religious affiliation, no ethnic background, no ideology. Just as disease grants no preference nor targets any one group, no one community is responsible for donation. For donation to work, it must be a shared endeavor,” said Frank Markel, President and CEO of TGLN.

“It is important for the Catholic community to raise awareness around organ and tissue donation. To reach out to those sick and suffering with a gift of one's vital organs is a tangible sign of our faith in action,” said Neil MacCarthy, Director of Public Relations and Communications of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

“Muslims must not be afraid of consenting to donate or feel they will not be rewarded by Allah for doing this act of organ donation. This intention to save a human life is well founded in the Sharia and the kindness is a true sadaqa jariya

(perpetual charity), the reward of which will manifest in society and the Day of Judgement,” said Imam Habeeb Alli.

“The value of human life is a cardinal value in Jewish Law. This is a value, which is expressed through the obligation for self-preservation, but also in the duty to save the life of another human being. This obligation is a mitzvah, a commandment, of such a supreme value that it takes precedence over virtually all other religious duties. The Toronto Board of Rabbis urges that consent be given for post-mortem organ donation when requested by doctors and hospitals for use when directly needed for life-saving transplantation procedures,” said Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich.

## QUICK FACTS

TGLN, in partnership with faith leaders has developed and implemented initiatives to encourage and empower donation in faith communities. Initiatives include: service in honour of donor families, religious ceremonies and faith focused pro-donation brochures.

Most major religions and their denominations support organ and tissue donation, including: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Protestantism, Islam, and the Baptists, Episcopal, Greek Orthodox, Lutherans, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Presbyterians, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons, and the Amish.

One organ and tissue donor can save up to eight lives and enhance as many as 75 others.

You can register your consent to donate your organs and tissue by visiting your local Service Ontario Health Card Services – OHIP office or outreach centre where you renew your health card. You can also register by downloading and filling out a Gift of Life Consent Form from [www.giftoflife.on.ca](http://www.giftoflife.on.ca) and mailing it to the address on the form.

If you’ve already signed your donor card, please also register your decision and talk to your family about your decision.

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Contact:

Carrie Hoto, Media Relations Advisor  
416.619.2299 (office), 416.735.0099 (cell), [choto@giftoflife.on.ca](mailto:choto@giftoflife.on.ca) (email)