

Media Release

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 4:00 p.m. ET
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FACEBOOK CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTING ORGAN AND TISSUE DONOR REGISTRATION EXPANDS TO ONTARIO

Today, Canada's 18 million active Facebook users will be offered the opportunity to identify as registered organ and tissue donors on their Facebook Timeline, highlighting to family and friends the generous choice they have made to save lives.

In Ontario, users will be encouraged to check their registration status and if they haven't already done so, to take two minutes to register online at www.BeADonor.ca.

One donor can save up to eight lives and enhance the lives of up to 75 others through the gift of tissue. Right now over 1,500 Ontarians are waiting for an organ transplant and sadly every three days, one of them will die waiting.

Only 22 per cent of Ontarians are registered donors, though many may mistakenly believe they have registered because they have a signed paper donor card. Donor cards are simply not effective, as they are not always available when needed. When a person registers their consent at www.BeADonor.ca, their donation decision is made available to their family at the right time, so that they can honour their loved one's generous choice to save lives.

Quotes:

"Social media is a key tool for creating a culture of donation in Ontario" says Ronnie Gavsie, President and CEO of the Trillium Gift of Life Network, Ontario's organ and tissue donation agency. "The success of our existing social sharing tools, such as The Gift of 8 Movement at www.BeADonor.ca, demonstrates that people are more likely to make the decision to register when inspired by people they know. We're very excited that Facebook has chosen to highlight the importance of organ and tissue donation and encourage Canadian Facebook users to display their choice on their timeline."

"By encouraging more people to register for organ donation, Facebook is offering hope to the 1,500 people waiting for a life-saving transplant in Ontario," says Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long Term Care. "I hope everyone on Facebook takes the opportunity to share their support for this cause with family and friends by identifying as a registered organ and tissue donor. Please visit www.BeADonor.ca to learn how easy it is to register consent online."

"Facebook is about connecting and sharing," says Jordan Banks, Managing Director, Facebook Canada. "We believe that by simply telling people that you're an organ donor, the power of sharing and connection can play an important role in solving the organ crisis in Canada."

Quick Facts:

- The organ and tissue donor registration rate in Ontario has increased from 18 per cent in March 2010 to 22 per cent today.
- Since launching www.beadonor.ca in June 2011 there have been 65,250 new online organ and tissue donor registrations in Ontario.
- The number of deceased organ donors from Ontario increased from 142 in 2003 to 220 in 2011.

Trillium Gift of Life Network is a not-for-profit agency of the Government of Ontario responsible for planning, promoting, coordinating and supporting organ and tissue donation for transplantation across Ontario and improving the system so that more lives can be saved.

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