

Media Release



RECORD LIVES SAVED THROUGH ORGAN DONATION, BUT NOT ENOUGH

New program to increase organ donation announced

April 21, 2008 – Toronto, ON - Ontarians will now be compensated for out-of-pocket expenses when they become living organ donors, Frank Markel, President and CEO of Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) announced today. Markel made the announcement at an event celebrating a record-breaking number of lives saved through organ donation.

“The Program to Reimburse Expenses of Living Organ Donors is just one more initiative that will help us to continue to make critical strides in improving the number of lives saved through organ donation,” Markel said.

Under the province’s organ donation strategy, any person who has donated or intends to donate a living organ to an Ontario resident from August 3, 2007, will now be reimbursed for expenses to cover the cost of travel, parking/transit, meals/meal allowance, accommodation and a loss of income subsidy.

“In 2007, more than 600 lives were saved as a result of deceased organ donation. Our progress is the result of continued support by the Government of Ontario, health care professionals, transplant centres, tissue banks, and the team at TGLN who work hard every day to promote the positive impact donation can make in people’s lives,” Markel said.

“We all have the power to save lives,” said Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman. “I tremendously respect donors and their families who, in a time of darkness, chose to give someone the precious gift of life. I encourage every Ontarian to register their wishes and talk to their loved ones about becoming an organ and tissue donor.”

The Castillo family donated their late 15-year-old son, Manny’s, organs as a way to keep Manny’s memory alive.

“Manny was a happy and outgoing teenager who lived for football and rugby. He died doing what he liked most: sports. We were not prepared and never thought that we’d lose a son. It was the most difficult time in our lives. We think that’s he’s still alive in some way with the donation of his organs. He’s an angel, and his mission now is to take care of his family and his friends,” said Manny’s father, Manuel Castillo.

Today in Ontario, more than 1600 people are waiting for an organ transplant. One donor can save up to eight lives through organ donation and enhance the lives of 75 others through the donation of tissue.

For more details on Trillium Gift of Life Network please visit our website at www.giftoflife.on.ca or call 416-363-4001 or toll free 1-800-263-2833.

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