



Media Release



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ONTARIO PHYSICIANS TAKE ACTION WHEN IT COMES TO ORGAN DONOR REGISTRATION

Public should feel reassured by high level of physician participation in organ donor registration

Ontario physicians far exceed the general Ontario population when it comes to registering consent for organ and tissue donation. According to a new study published today in JAMA, 43 per cent of Ontario physicians had registered consent compared to 29.5 per cent of Ontarians with a similar socio-demographic background and 24 per cent of the general population.

The study, which was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, is the first to measure the organ donor registration rate among physicians. It was conducted by the Kidney, Dialysis and Transplantation Research Program of the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) in partnership with Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN).

“Ontario physicians save lives every day. They are also personally committed to saving lives through organ and tissue donor registration,” says Ronnie Gavsie, TGLN’s President and CEO. “The high rate of registration among physicians demonstrates their confidence and trust in the donation and transplantation system. We hope this helps to dispel a common myth about physicians not working as hard to save the lives of registered organ donors.”

Organ and tissue donation in Ontario is part of quality end-of-life care in hospitals with safeguards in place to ensure that donation is initiated at the appropriate time. These safeguards include:

- Donor registration information is confidential and stored in a Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care database. Access to a person’s donation decision is only provided to TGLN at end-of-life for the purpose of sharing this information with families to reaffirm their loved one’s consent to proceed with organ and tissue donation;
- The first and foremost duty of health care professionals is to save a life. Only when a life cannot be saved is the opportunity for organ and tissue donation introduced; and,
- The team of health care professionals supporting the donation process is separate and distinct from the transplant team to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

“We are proud that physicians are leading from the front when it comes to organ and tissue donor registration,” says Dr. Amit Garg, a Scientist in the ICES Kidney, Dialysis and Transplantation Research Program, nephrologist at the London Health Sciences Centre and professor at Western University. “Ontarians can be comforted in knowing that physicians personally support donor registration and should not fear that registration will compromise their health care treatment in an emergency.”

“Ontario doctors are proud to support organ and tissue donation,” says Dr. Ved Tandan, President of the Ontario Medical Association. “We will encourage our colleagues and the Ontario public to register their consent at www.beadonor.ca.”

Quick Facts:

- Currently 2.9 million or 25 per cent of Ontarians are registered organ and tissue donors.
- Donor registration saves lives. Almost all families consent to donation when their loved ones are registered; consent drops dramatically in the absence of registration.
- You can register consent or check your registration status at www.beadonor.ca.
- You can withdraw or change your donation decision at any time.
- One organ donor can save up to 8 lives and enhance the lives of up to 75 others through tissue donation.

Author block: Alvin Ho-ting Li, BHSc1; Stephanie Dixon, PhD2; Versha Prakash, MHA3;
S. Joseph Kim, MD, PhD2; Greg A. Knoll, MD, MSc4; Ngan N. Lam, MD1; Amit X Garg, MD, PhD2

1. Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada
2. Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, Ontario, Canada
3. Trillium Gift of Life, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
4. Department of Medicine, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

CONTACT:

Danielle Milley
Trillium Gift of Life Network
(o) 416-619-2363
(c) 416-689-7711
dmilley@giftoflife.on.ca

Deborah Creatura
ICES
(o) 416-480-4780
(c) 647-406-5996
deborah.creatura@ices.on.ca

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.

ICES is an independent, non-profit organization that uses population-based health information to produce knowledge on a broad range of health care issues. Our unbiased evidence provides measures of health system performance, a clearer understanding of the shifting health care needs of Ontarians, and a stimulus for discussion of practical solutions to optimize scarce resources. ICES knowledge is highly regarded in Canada and abroad, and is widely used by government, hospitals, planners, and practitioners to make decisions about care delivery and to develop policy.

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