

# Media Release

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For Immediate Release  
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## **Barely Half of Potential Organ Donors Become Donors**

*Notification and conversion rates for hospitals now available online*

New performance data reported by Trillium Gift of Life Network (TGLN) shows there are opportunities for both hospitals and Ontarians to play a role when it comes to increasing the number of lives saved through organ and tissue donation in Ontario.

From April 1 to December 31, 2013, 42 designated hospitals in Ontario reported an average of 93 per cent of potential organ and tissue donation cases to TGLN. During the same period, only 52 per cent of potential donation cases became organ donors, referred to as conversion rate.

“TGLN is committed to working closely with our hospital partners to improve donation rates by helping them implement best practices and ensure timely referral of potential donation cases,” says Ronnie Gavsie, President and CEO of TGLN. “TGLN is also working to increase consent to organ donation by ensuring well trained TGLN staff approach families to discuss donation.”

Focus is being placed on the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) as conversion rates at the majority of hospitals in this part of the province have historically been below average. Steps are being taken to improve performance of both hospitals and TGLN. These include:

- Designating a physician at each hospital to work with TGLN to ensure integration of donation best practices with end-of-life care, starting with GTA hospitals;
- Implementation of a new referral process with CitiCall Ontario and Neurosurgery Ontario to ensure potential organ donors are identified and referred in a timely manner; and,
- Enhanced diversity training for TGLN staff to better meet the needs of Ontario families when discussing organ and tissue donation.

“At Sunnybrook we are committed to partnering with TGLN to improve our notification and conversion rates,” says Dr. Barry McLellan, President and CEO of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. “We are taking steps to improve timely notification of potential organ and tissue donation cases and better integrate donation with end-of-life care practices. Staff and

physicians at Sunnybrook are keenly aware of the benefits of organ and tissue donation and are working hard to create a strong culture of donation at our hospital.”

“I encourage Ontario hospitals and TGLN to continue their collaboration to provide high quality end-of-life care to patients and to ensure that families of potential organ and tissue donors are given the opportunity to save lives through the gift of organ and tissue donation,” says Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

An important step that Ontarians can take to help save lives is to register their consent for organ donation at [beadonor.ca](http://www.beadonor.ca) and to talk to their family about their wishes. Most families consent to donating their loved ones’ organs when they are registered.

New data available today at [www.beadonor.ca](http://www.beadonor.ca) shows that as of March 31, 2013, 25 per cent or 2.9 million Ontarians have registered their consent to save lives through organ and tissue donation. From April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014, registered donors grew by 232,628.

#### **Quick Facts:**

- Only when a patient’s life cannot be saved does organ and tissue donation become an option. Organ donation will only proceed with family consent and following declaration of death by two physicians.
- Donor registration is confidential. This information is only provided to TGLN at end-of-life to share with families when they are approached to seek consent for donation.
- Only 2-3 per cent of hospital deaths occur in circumstances that permit organ donation.
- To be able to facilitate organ donation, a hospital must have the capacity to sustain a patient on a ventilator for a continued period of time.
- One donor can save up to 8 lives and improve the lives of up to 75 others through tissue donation.
- You can register consent for organ and tissue donation at [www.beadonor.ca](http://www.beadonor.ca).
- Donation performance data including routine notification rate and conversion rate, by hospital is available at <http://www.giftoflife.on.ca/en/publicreporting.htm>

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*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.*