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Ontario sets new record for organ donation and transplants

TORONTO – New preliminary data available from Trillium Gift of Life Network, Ontario’s donation and transplant agency, reveals an unprecedented number of lives saved through organ donation and transplantation in a single quarter.

In the first quarter of 2019/20 (April 1 – June 30, 2019), a record number of organ transplants saved the lives of 388 Ontarians. This achievement is credited to Trillium Gift of Life Network’s world-class practices in organ and tissue donation and transplantation, the commitment of its hospital partners and transplant programs, and most importantly, the altruism of donor families who contributed to an increase in deceased organ donation.

During the same reporting period, a record 106 deceased organ donors generously gave the gift of life to someone in the end stages of a terminal disease, and an additional 553 tissue donors gave the gift of eyes, skin, bone and heart valves.

Trillium Gift of Life Network continues to lead North America in expanding the opportunity for donation. It was the first in Canada to implement donation after death by circulatory determination (DCD) in 2006, and now, approximately one in three organ donors are a result of DCD. More recently, TGLN became the first organ procurement organization in North America to implement medical assistance in dying protocols to ensure those medically eligible have the option to consider donation as part of their end-of-life care.

“We are seeing this incredible increase in donation and transplant because of the commitment of Trillium Gift of Life Network and its hospital partners to continually offer the opportunity for donation as part of quality end of life care,” says Dr. Jeffrey Zaltzman, Transplant Nephrologist at St. Michael’s Hospital. “As a transplant physician, I oversee the health of patients on the waitlist. On behalf of those waiting for a transplant – we are thrilled by these results, and we thank Trillium Gift of Life for your unrelenting focus on saving and enhancing lives through donation and transplant.”

“Our leadership in organ and tissue donation and transplant is a source of pride for Ontario,” says Ronnie Gavsie, President and CEO, Trillium Gift of Life Network. “But despite the increases in lives saved, the need for transplant continues to outweigh the number of organs available. There is still much work to do. As long as there are lives lost on the waitlist because of lack of organs, we pledge to stay focused on ever greater improvement and innovation.”

Registration has a significant impact on organ and tissue donation. In the first quarter of 2019/20, families overwhelmingly re-affirmed their loved one’s registered consent decision, fulfilling their last wish, and saving lives. Today 34 per cent of Ontarians are registered donors. Visit www.BeADonor.ca to register or learn more.

Quick facts:

- Today more than 1,600 people in Ontario are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, and every three days someone dies waiting.
- One organ donor can save up to eight lives, and enhance as many as 75 more through the gift of tissue.
- Northern Ontario continues to lead the province in donor registration, with the Greater Toronto Area lagging. Find out how your community is doing by visiting www.BeADonor.ca/scoreboard.

Media are invited to contact Trillium Gift of Life Network for assistance in connecting with real stories about the impact of organ and tissue donation and transplant.

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Trillium Gift of Life Network is the Government of Ontario agency responsible for delivering and coordinating organ and tissue donation and transplantation services across the province, as well as for planning, promoting and supporting all health care and allied professionals, advocates and the Ontario public in fulfilling their shared and integrated responsibilities in saving the lives of Ontarians waiting for a life-saving transplant.