

Media Release

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RECORD BREAKING YEAR FOR DONATION AND TRANSPLANT IN ONTARIO

TORONTO – New data released by Trillium Gift of Life Network, Ontario’s organ and tissue donation and transplant agency, reveals that last year in Ontario, more people than ever before gave the gift of tissue. In 2018, there were 2,413 tissue donors, an increase of 85 per cent over the last 10 years.

Trillium Gift of Life Network credits this improvement to the expansion of routine notification to more hospitals, requiring the hospitals to notify Trillium Gift of Life Network when a patient has died.

A single tissue donor has the potential to help up to 75 people: a cornea transplant can restore sight, a skin graft can help burn patients, and a heart valve replacement can help a child with a congenital heart condition play and thrive.

In 2018, Ontario also set a record for the most organ donors after death by circulatory determination (DCD) with 118 giving the gift of life. Donation after DCD is an option when a patient has a severe illness, with no chance of recovery, and the family has decided to withdraw life-sustaining treatment. Over the last 10 years, the number of DCD donors has increased by 219 per cent, which has transformed the lives of patients waiting for an organ transplant in Ontario.

Last year similarly marked a banner year for transplantation in Ontario. Heart transplant patients waited, on average, fewer days than ever before; experiencing a 42 per cent decrease in the average wait time in one year alone (from 214 days in 2017 to 120 days in 2018). And lung transplants saved an unprecedented number of lives, with 195 patients receiving the gift of life, a 75 per cent increase in the last five years.

“Because someone took two minutes to register as a donor, and because a family made the selfless decision to donate their loved one’s organs and tissues, the lives of many Ontarians were forever changed in 2018,” says Ronnie Gavsie, President and CEO, Trillium Gift of Life Network. “But despite all the progress, it is not enough. Every three days someone dies waiting for an organ transplant.”

As of December 31, 2018, 4.2 million Ontarians have registered their consent to organ and tissue donation. To register or learn more, visit www.BeADonor.ca.

2018 by the numbers:

- 333 deceased organ donors and 2,413 tissue donors
- 1,236 organ transplants
- 1,630 people on the transplant waitlist (as of December 31, 2018)
- 252,581 new registered organ and tissue donors

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Trillium Gift of Life Network is the Government of Ontario agency responsible for planning, promoting, coordinating and supporting organ and tissue donation and transplantation across the province and for continually improving the system so that more lives can be saved.