

Ontario Sets New Record Highs for Organ Donation and Transplantation in 2019

TORONTO, ON - (February 11, 2020) – In 2019, Ontario set new records for the most organs donated and transplanted in a single year: there were 1,386 organ transplants and 684 deceased and living organ donors, a 13% increase over the previous year. Trillium Gift of Life Network achieved record-breaking results across its internationally-renowned organ and tissue donation and transplant system due to a combination of expanded protocols, innovative treatments and effective leading practices.

“More Ontarians than ever before gave and received the gift of life last year thanks to the collaboration among our forward-thinking hospital partners, dedicated stakeholder groups and hard-working staff,” said Ronnie Gavsie, CEO and President of Trillium Gift of Life Network. “These achievements inspire us to do more. We will continue to work with fervor toward a day when no Ontarian dies on the wait list due to a lack of an organ or tissue.”

Higher transplant numbers are partly attributable to technological and medical advancements that allow for the transplantation of organs from donors who historically would have been excluded due to prior medical conditions – these donors accounted for 21% of all organ transplants in 2019. Transplants of healthy and suitable organs from donors with hepatitis C, for example, can now safely occur, expanding the pool of potential donors and decreasing wait times for recipients on the list. There was a 41% increase of donors with hepatitis C in 2019 as compared to 2018, and a 39% increase in transplants from these donors.

In recent years, Trillium Gift of Life Network streamlined the province’s tissue recovery system and established new initiatives. This included the consolidation of ocular and multi-tissue recovery and the launch of a tissue referral program with emergency medical service responders, both of which have contributed to the record numbers in tissue donation. In 2019, there was a new milestone of 281 multi-tissue donations, with a remarkable 81% increase of skin donors from the previous year.

“Organ and tissue donations and transplants play an important role in saving and enhancing the lives of many Ontarians,” said Christine Elliott, Ontario’s Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “This is an incredible achievement led by Trillium Gift of Life Network. Through their collaborative work with our health system partners, Ontario has made significant strides in organ and tissue donations and transplants that will help more patients and families access the life-saving procedures.”

RECORD-BREAKING NUMBERS IN 2019*

	Record Number	% Increase from 2018
TOTAL TRANSPLANTS	1,386	12%
KIDNEY FROM DECEASED DONORS	500	13%
KIDNEY FROM LIVING DONOR	242	11%
KIDNEY/PANCREAS	41	21%
LIVER FROM DECEASED DONOR	223	15%
LIVER FROM LIVING DONOR	60	9%
LUNG	210	8%
TOTAL ORGAN DONORS	684	13%
DECEASED ORGAN DONORS	382	15%
LIVING ORGAN DONORS	302	10%
MULTI-TISSUE DONORS	281	37%
SKIN DONORS	98	81%

**Numbers valid as of February 9, 2020*

Ontario's established leading-practices, such as routine notification, which requires hospitals and referring partners to report all potential organ and tissue donation cases to Trillium Gift of Life Network, led to a record 7,901 organ referrals and 33,585 tissue referrals in 2019. Additionally, Trillium Gift of Life Network's trained Organ and Tissue Donation Coordinators and referring partners approached 1,341 families to discuss the option of organ and tissue donation after their loved one died and a remarkable 816 families agreed to the gift of life through organ donation.

Registration has a strong connection to donation. When a potential donor has formally registered to be an organ and tissue donor, families almost always proceed with donation. In the absence of registration, families only consent half the time. There has been a steady increase in the percentage of organ donors who were formally registered, and 2019 had the highest percentage at 51%. Trillium Gift of Life Network's robust public awareness and education campaign emphasizes the importance of registering to be an organ and tissue donor and encourages all Ontarians to do so. Currently, more than 4.2 million Ontarians, or 34% of the eligible population, have registered for organ and tissue donation.

Trillium Gift of Life Network consistently explores new ways to expand donation opportunities. In 2016, organ donation was integrated as part of quality end-of-life care for individuals receiving the provision of medical assistance in dying (MAID).

"We congratulate Trillium Gift of Life Network on their record-breaking year. Their continued commitment to advancing leading practices to increase donations and transplants is remarkable," said Dr. Beatriz Domínguez-Gil, Director General of Spain's Organización Nacional de Trasplantes (ONT), the world's leader in organ donation.

There are more than 1,600 people across Ontario waiting to receive a life-saving organ transplant. Every three days, someone dies while waiting. Learn more about how organ donation can help to save a life by visiting www.beadonor.ca.

CONTACT:

Margaret Barng

Manager, Public Education and Marketing

416-619-2389

MBarng@giftoflife.on.ca

Trillium Gift of Life Network

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.