
NEWS RELEASE

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New report on organ donation highlights changes in laws, need for more donors

Changes in Missouri's organ donation laws have strengthened a person's right to become an organ donor.

Previously, individuals registered to become organ donors, but a family member made the final decision before organs or tissue were donated. Under the revised law, the donor is now in charge of the decision. Family consent is no longer necessary.

Missourians signing up for the state's registry are now giving "first-person consent" to become organ and tissue donors at the time of their death. Residents who registered to become donors prior to August 28, 2008, need to sign up again to obtain the first-person consent status. Missourians who choose not to change their organ donor status in the registry will remain on the state's organ donor "intent registry."

The changes are explained in a new report put together by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and the Governor's Organ Donation Advisory Committee. The Missouri Organ Donation 2008 Annual Report highlights efforts to encourage Missourians to sign up for the state's organ donor registry. It also features stories about several residents who have benefitted from an organ transplant, the work of the advisory committee and the program's partners.

"The purpose of this year's report was two-fold – to highlight some critical changes made by the Missouri legislature to the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act and to tell some important stories about how receiving a donated organ has transformed people's lives," said Virginia Beatty, manager of the state organ donor program. "We hope that people will find this report informative and inspiring and consider signing up to be an organ and tissue donor."

In addition to clarifying Missouri's revised donor registry law, the report includes several stories about organ and tissue recipients. They include Rhonda Kremer, a state health department employee who received a new kidney last October. You can see and hear Kremer tell her own story at www.dhss.mo.gov/OrganDonor/Publications.html.

"I hope the stories and information readers find in this report will encourage them to decide to add their names to the ever-growing organ donor registry," Beatty said.

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Missourians can sign up for the state's organ and tissue donor registry or change their status from "intent" to "first-person consent" in one of the following ways:

- Register on-line at www.missouriorgandonor.com
- Register when receiving or renewing an instruction permit, drivers license or nondrivers license
- Sign the back of their drivers or nondrivers license
- Fill out an application form and mail or fax it to: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, P.O. Box 570, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102-0570, fax 573-522-2898. An application form can be obtained at www.missouriorgandonor.com

The Missouri Organ Donation 2008 Annual Report is available at www.dhss.mo.gov/OrganDonor/2008AnnualReport.pdf.

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