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NATIONAL MINORITY DONOR AWARENESS DAY

Waiting list for organs is still disproportionately minority...

Durham, NC – In observance of National Minority Donor Awareness Day, Carolina Donor Services calls attention to the 59,000 minority individuals that account for 53 percent of the United States transplant waiting list. There are nearly 108,000 people of all ages, races, and religions in desperate need of life-saving organ transplants that may not come in time.

Karl Keyes lives in Cary, NC. "As both an organ donor and recipient, registering to be an organ donor is critical. In the minority community the need is great but registered donors are few. Minorities suffer from a higher incidence of hypertension and diabetes. As a result, we are more likely to develop many other medical problems that can lead to organ failure. By having that little heart applied to your drivers license you are showing your care and concern. This simple act can help so many. I helped my brother and a donor helped me."

Successful transplantation is often enhanced by matching of organs between members of the same racial and ethnic group therefore, the need for minority donors is critical. Minority patients may have to wait longer for organs and therefore may be sicker at the time of transplant or, unfortunately, die waiting. With more donated organs from minorities, finding a match will be quicker and the waiting time will be reduced.

Robert Roache, a kidney recipient, is aware of just how fortunate he is. "As an African-American and the recipient of an organ; I think it is very important to increase awareness about organ donation in the minority community. It is crucial for everyone to become informed and educate themselves about becoming a donor. There are lots of misconceptions and myths that may lead to someone delaying their decision to become a registered donor; however organ donation saves lives and for that I am eternally

grateful.”

National Minority Awareness Day is observed every August 1 to increase awareness of organ donation among African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander and Native American populations. In addition, organ procurement organizations and transplant centers across the country focus special efforts to reach minority populations to promote donation and answer questions and concerns.

For additional statistics about minority populations and donation, visit the Data section of the UNOS Web site or the Division of Transplantation in the Health Resources and Services Administration at www.organdonor.gov.

About Carolina Donor Services

Carolina Donor Services is the federally-designated, non-profit organ and tissue donation organization serving 6.8 million people in 78 counties of North Carolina and Danville, Virginia. Carolina Donor Services maximizes the passing of the heroic gift of life from one human being to another through organ and tissue donation. In North Carolina, over 3,400 people are currently waiting for an organ transplant, and nationally, over 107,000 people are on the organ waiting list. For more information, visit www.carolinadonorservices.org; call 1-800-200-2672 or write 3621 Lyckan Parkway, Durham, NC 27707.

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