



# Life Goes On

Secretary of State Jesse White • Spring/Summer 2017

A newsletter for Secretary of State facility employees and other organ/tissue donation advocates

This legislative session, my office introduced new legislation that will allow 16- and 17-year-olds the opportunity to register as organ/tissue donors. The bill goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2018, and will enable more than 300,000 individuals' names to be added to the registry annually.

My office was proud to be part of Chicago's first Organ Summit, which ushered in a new donor culture in Illinois that focused on making Chicago a hub of tissue and organ donation. Hundreds of people attended the summit and heard testimonies from city and state dignitaries, transplant surgeons and those touched by donation.

Another exciting National Donate Life Month is in the books. We kicked the month off with a new campaign featuring the question "What If." Many community events, press conferences, dedications and donor registry entries made this April's National Donate Life Month a successful one.

Our program staff is busy creating donor awareness opportunities in communities throughout the state in the coming months. These events educate the public about the importance of registering as donors. As always, I am proud of our driver services facility staff members as they continue to ask the donor question hundreds of times each day. We appreciate your diligence in helping us save lives.

*Jesse White*

Jesse White  
Secretary of State

## White succeeds in expanding Organ/Tissue Donor Registry; 16- and 17-year-olds will have option to become donors

Secretary of State Jesse White initiated legislation that would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to register for the state's First Person Consent Organ/Tissue Donor Registry when they receive their driver's licenses or identification cards.

The legislation was introduced by state Sen. Mattie Hunter (D-Chicago) and state Rep. Deb Conroy (D-Villa Park) and goes into effect Jan. 1, 2018.

"Our goal is always to save lives," White said. "Thousands of Illinoisans are waiting for an organ. Many of those who wait are someone's mother, father, daughter or son. This legislation, which the vast majority of other states have implemented, is an important step in reducing the number of those on the waiting list."

The legislation amends the Illinois Anatomical Gift Act allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to join the First Person Consent Organ/Tissue Donor Registry. Under current law, an individual must be at least 18 years old to join the registry.

Those who join the registry will receive a letter from the Secretary of State's office thanking them for joining. White encourages 16- and 17-year-olds to use this letter as a basis for discussing their decision with their parents.

By joining the First Person Consent Organ/Tissue Donor Registry, 16- and 17-year-olds

(cont. on pg. 4)



Secretary White testifies before the Illinois Senate to discuss the details of the new bill allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to register to become organ/tissue donors.



Secretary White unveils new legislation that will allow 16- and 17-year-olds to register for the state's organ/tissue registry when they receive their driver's licenses or ID cards.

## Spotlight on Health

### Kidney disease affects 1 in 7 Americans

According to the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois (NKFI), a third of American adults are at high risk for developing kidney disease during their lifetime. Every year, 90,000 Americans die of kidney disease. More than 1 million Illinoisans have kidney disease, although many are unaware of the fact. Although these are sobering statistics, many of the factors that contribute to kidney disease can be prevented or controlled.

Some risk factors for kidney disease include diabetes, high blood pressure, family history of kidney disease, older age and being African-American, Hispanic, Asian or Native American. Many Americans on the national waiting list for a kidney transplant are waiting because of complications due to diabetes.

Kidney disease often has no symptoms and can go undetected until it has advanced. Red flags include fatigue, little or no appetite, trouble sleeping, swollen feet and ankles, puffiness around the eyes, dry and itchy skin and the need to urinate more often.

**Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney disease** according to the NKFI. Millions of Americans have diabetes, yet many are unaware of the disease. Diabetes is a disease where the body does not make enough insulin or use the insulin it produces properly. Long-term diabetes (either Type 1 or Type 2) can injure or compromise kidney health and cause the kidneys to shut down.

**High blood pressure is the second leading cause of chronic kidney disease**, according to the NKFI. One of the best ways to prevent kidney disease is to maintain a healthy blood pressure. Unchecked high blood pressure puts unnecessary strain on kidney function. Many Americans are at risk for high blood pressure if it runs in their families. Everyone is encouraged to check his or her blood pressure several times a year

(cont. on pg. 4)

## First Chicago Organ Summit unites

Secretary White joined hundreds of individuals and donor advocacy groups at the first Chicago Organ Summit at the Chicago Cultural Center. The summit's goal was to unite local and state government, hospitals and health systems, transplant centers, patient advocacy groups and other partnering organizations in Illinois to transform Chicago into an integral hub of transplantation in the coming years. The goal is to increase transplantation by 35 percent in the next three years.

Many donor advocates, City of Chicago representatives, transplant surgeons and physicians spoke at the three-hour event, stating goals of increased transplantation in the coming years.

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson, who was at the time waiting for a kidney transplant, spoke about the need for more donors in Illinois and encouraged those attending to spread the word about the benefits of transplants.

Mayor Emanuel repeated the Jewish proverb that if one person saves another person's life, it's like saving the whole world. He also spoke about the generosity of many who came forward offering support to Superintendent Johnson. Johnson said that when he was 25, he was told he would need a kidney in a few years. Now, 25 years later, he openly admitted his need and went public to encourage others waiting for organ and tissue donation. "I hope that by coming forward with my story, it will help others get a transplant," he explained. "I will be forever a spokesman for organ donation," he added.

Gift of Hope CEO Organ and Tissue Donor Network Kevin Cmunt noted that his organization plans to increase transplantation in Illinois by 35 percent by the year 2020 along with transplanting 2,000 organs. Gift of Hope has increased donation by 50 percent over the last four years. This increase, in keeping with the summit's goals of building Chicago into a mecca of transplantation, will mean shorter waiting times for many in critical organ failure.



ABOVE: Secretary of State Jesse White speaks at the first Chicago Organ Summit.



LEFT: Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson and Secretary of State Jesse White speak at the first Chicago Organ Summit.

## World Kidney Day celebrated in Oak Lawn

### Hundreds receive lifesaving information and screenings

Hundreds attended World Kidney Day at the Oak View Community Center in Oak Lawn. A comprehensive kidney disease screening day, which included educational programs for at-risk individuals, was offered to those most in need of information about kidney disease. The brand new National Kidney Foundation of Illinois (NKFI) Kidney Mobile ribbon cutting ceremony with Secretary of State Jesse White was a highlight of the event.

It is estimated that 1 in 7 Americans suffer from chronic kidney disease. Many of these individuals are unaware that they have this condition, according to the NKFI. The free Kidney Mobile screenings, early kidney disease detection tests and additional education encouraged hundreds to take advantage of becoming more aware of their kidney disease factors. It also helped attendees understand if they were already experiencing symptoms of kidney disease. Uncontrolled diabetes, high blood pressure and hypertension can lead to kidney disease. These are treatable conditions that reduce kidney disease risk. In addition to the health screenings, dozens of health providers set up informational tables at the event, distributed important literature and answered questions about their health.

Since 2005, the Kidney Mobile has screened nearly 50,000 individuals across the state. The mobile offers free comprehensive screenings and tests for kidney disease, diabetes and high blood pressure, as well as providing participants with follow-up services and after care.



Secretary of State Jesse White cuts the ribbon revealing the new National Kidney Foundation of Illinois' Kidney Mobile at World Kidney Day in Oak Lawn. NKFI CEO Anne Black applauds the dedication of the new mobile.

## WHAT IF? National Donate Life Month brings launch of new campaign

### "What If" campaign featured life-changing transplant stories

The launch of the new "What If" organ/tissue donor campaign in Illinois kicked off National Donate Life Month in April. The new campaign for 2017 included colorful brochures partnered with television and radio public service announcements that focused on three transplant recipient experiences. The "What If" stories featured the recipients revealing what milestones they might have missed had they not received their lifesaving gifts.

### Employee Connection



Rick Samson

For Sandra Rexroad, an employee of Driver Services in Springfield at Dirksen Parkway's fiscal office, saving her brother Rick Samson's life by donating a kidney to him seemed the most natural thing in the world. In

February 2015, after suffering an abdominal aortic aneurysm, Rick, a concrete worker and resident of Taylorville, was rushed to the hospital where he underwent emergency surgery. Fortunately for Rick, 56, the rupture was repaired, but not before it had destroyed both of his kidneys. This required him to undergo dialysis five days a week. His only hope for a normal life was a kidney transplant.

After an extensive matching process, Sandra donated a kidney to her brother in September 2015 at Memorial Medical Center in Springfield. Rick is now enjoying life with his wife, three children and 10 grandchildren.

"I don't regret it for one minute," said Sandra of her lifesaving decision for her brother. "It's the best decision ever," she added. Living donation runs in Sandra's family. Her older sister donated a kidney to a younger sister 17 years ago.

### QUICK DONOR STATS

- Every 10 minutes a person is added to the national transplant waiting list.
- One donor can save or enhance up to 25 lives with organ and tissue transplants.
- Nearly all Americans support organ donation but only slightly more than half register.
- Approximately 4,700 Illinois residents are waiting for lifesaving organ transplants.
- 22 people die every day on the national transplant waiting list.
- Approximately 300 people die each year in Illinois waiting for transplants.
- 1,200 lives were saved by Illinois donors in 2016.
- It only takes 30 seconds to register your donor decision.
- Help save a life. Register as an organ/tissue donor today.

## Organ/Tissue Donor Registry

(cont. from pg. 1)

will be giving consent to donate their organs and tissue at the time of their death, with a single limitation. The procurement organizations, Gift of Hope Organ and Tissue Network and Mid-America Transplant, must make a reasonable effort to contact parents or guardians to ensure that they approve of the donation. The parent or guardian will have the opportunity to overturn the child's decision. Once the 16- or 17-year-old turns 18, his/her decision will be considered legally binding without limitation.

## Spotlight on Health (cont. from pg. 2)

and seek medical advice for controlling it if it is high.

There are five stages to kidney disease. A person with stage 1 or 2 (mild) has slight kidney damage, but typically does not notice any symptoms. Stage 3 (moderate) might produce symptoms in individuals such as fatigue, frequent urination and possible kidney pain, and an individual with stage 4 (severe) would definitely produce some of these symptoms but in greater depth. At stage 5 (end stage kidney failure) there would be severe loss of kidney function with numerous physical symptoms and possibly the need for dialysis or a kidney transplant.

## Why the kidneys are important

The kidneys' main function is to filter out waste, toxins and impurities from the bloodstream. Kidneys help control blood pressure, keep bones healthy and make red blood cells. Ways to maintain kidney health include reducing high cholesterol and blood pressure, quitting smoking, controlling diabetes (the leading cause of chronic kidney disease), eating healthy foods and keeping a healthy weight through diet and exercise.

## Lake Zurich Driver Services facility opens

### Libertyville facility closes

A new Driver Services facility opened this year as the long-standing Libertyville facility closed its doors at the end of 2016. Now open is a new facility at 951 S. Rand Road in Lake Zurich. The new facility is a spacious, newly renovated Secretary of State's office servicing Lake Zurich and the surrounding area.



Employees at the Lake Zurich Driver Services facility show their support for organ and tissue donation at the newly opened facility. From left: Assistant Manager Victor Herrera, Driver Services Manager Loretta Ivy, Vehicle Services Assistant Manager Mary Ann Thompson, Senior Manager Chris Karabis, Supervisor Ana Carollo, Vehicle Services Manager Roy Carrington and employee Mirian Contreras.

### DONOR PROGRAM STAFF LIST

#### PROGRAM DIRECTOR (CHICAGO)

Connie Boatman.....wboatman@ilsos.net

#### ASSISTANT PROGRAM DIRECTOR (SPRINGFIELD)

Samantha Brill .....sbrill@ilsos.net

#### REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Damarius Blanks (Metro east).....dblanks@ilsos.net

Brian Bush (southern Illinois).....bbush@ilsos.net

Jan Eschen (northern Illinois).....jeschen@ilsos.net

Elizabeth Hager (central Illinois).....lhager@ilsos.net

Karen Kohnke (Bloomington).....kkohnke@ilsos.net

Felicia Lee (Chicago).....flee@ilsos.net

Dan Lietz (Chicago).....dlietz@ilsos.net

Margaret Pearson (suburban Chicago).....mpearson@ilsos.net



Like us  
@JesseWhiteSOS



Follow us  
@ILSecofState

#LifeGoesOn