

SECRETARY OF STATE JESSE WHITE ORGAN/TISSUE DONOR PROGRAM

History of the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Program

1991 – Staff begins work in June to develop a poster contest that would provide a conduit to inform students in grades K-12 about organ and tissue donation. Working in tandem with the Illinois State Library, materials are provided to schools and libraries statewide.

1991 – The Secretary of State's first organ/tissue donor celebrity signing is held in December. Celebrities from film, television, radio and sports join the Secretary of State to witness signatures on the organ donor portion of driver's licenses and identification cards.

1992 – The Secretary of State's office announces the creation of the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Registry, making Illinois one of only three states in the country to maintain such a listing at that time and the first state to maintain a usable and accessible registry. A three-pronged approach is designed to give procurement agencies the ability to look at numbers geographically, to approach families with information and to measure the success of the organ/tissue donor public awareness program. **The registry utilizes the current driver's license database and is implemented at no cost to the taxpayers. As part of the registry, a toll-free 800 number is established at the Secretary of State Police Command Center.** This 800 number is accessed by procurement agencies when there is a question about an individual's participation in the registry.

1992 – The computerized registry goes online on Oct. 1, 1992.

1992 – The first year-end query of the registry reveals that 22 percent of those applying for or renewing licenses opt to join the computerized registry.

1993 – The Illinois General Assembly passes legislation to provide funding for organ and tissue donor education and awareness.

- As a result, Driver Services facilities are encouraged to continually promote organ/tissue donation.
- Posters, brochures and other materials (in English and Spanish) are placed in all facilities.
- Driver Services facility staff training efforts are intensified by targeting facilities that have below-average donor registry numbers.
- A full-time organ/tissue donor training coordinator is appointed.
- Displays of photos that feature local transplant recipients are placed in each facility.
- Production of a motivational tape for Driver Services facility personnel is implemented at each location.

- A statewide volunteer bureau is established, consisting of organ and tissue transplant recipients, to enhance local facility training programs.
- Recognition awards are distributed to those facilities that reach a 50 or 60 percent donor registry mark, as well as awards to facilities that show significant progress in achieving their goals.

1994 – Through a grant from the Secretary of State’s office, Southern Illinois University (SIU) School of Medicine designs and implements a four-year curriculum for medical students that examines the physician’s role in organ/tissue donation. The attitudes of physicians and students about organ/tissue donation also are surveyed by SIU. This program is shared with other medical schools to encourage early interaction in the donation process.

1994 – Information about organ/tissue donation is included in all driver’s license renewal notices and made available at all Driver Services facilities.

1995 – High school driver education and health classes are targeted to inform students about organ/tissue donation. Videos, brochures and speakers are available to instructors.

1995 – In conjunction with the Illinois Hospital and Health Systems Association, a survey of hospitals is conducted to assess interest in and commitment to organ/tissue donation. The survey reveals that 87 percent of respondents are interested in receiving training about the donation process.

1995 – Spanish radio commercials, billboards, posters, brochures, clergy guides and public awareness videos are developed and materials are made available through a bilingual hotline.

1995—National Donate Life Month in April is kicked off with a two-day conference highlighting the shortage of donated organs.

1996 – A campaign to build awareness about organ/tissue donation in the African-American community is launched in the summer. It includes a community guidebook and a speakers’ bureau.

1999 – Walter Payton, a Chicago Bears’ legend, highlights the need for organ/tissue donation as he discloses his own struggle with a rare liver cancer. Secretary White explained that Payton’s “emotional and honest treatment of his illness was instrumental in raising the rate of those signing up for the organ donor program. He highlighted the need for organ donation across the country, as well as throughout the African-American community.” Payton passed on Nov. 1, and the Payton family begins a strong partnership with Secretary White’s to promote organ/tissue awareness.

1999 – The first *Life Goes On* committee is established in Peoria to bring together community members, business leaders, clergy, medical personal and individuals who have been affected by donation to promote donor awareness within the community.

2000 – Secretary White and Connie Payton, widow of Chicago Bears' superstar Walter Payton, are featured in radio and television Public Service Announcements (PSA) promoting organ/tissue donation.

2000 – The *Life Goes On* program expands to include the establishment of committees in Carbondale, Chicago, Bloomington, LaSalle-Peru, Champaign, Quincy, Macon County and the Illinois Valley.

2000 – A countertop display project which features donation stories of local residents is established in Driver Services facilities statewide.

2000 – Secretary of State Jesse White, joined by Connie Payton unveil the new organ donor awareness license plate, available to Illinois motorists on Jan. 1, 2001. The new plate is a joint effort between White's office and the Chicago Bears organization. The sale of the plates raise funds to promote organ/tissue donor awareness programs. The plate also honors Walter Payton, whose struggle with a rare liver cancer focused attention on the importance of organ/tissue donation.

2001 – Secretary White launches efforts to increase the number of participants in the state's organ/tissue donor program with a tour of eight cities, many of which implemented *Life Goes On* committees. Events are planned in Chicago, Peoria, Bloomington/Normal, Carbondale, Edwardsville, Quincy, Macon County and the Illinois Valley.

2002 – Secretary of State Jesse White announces a campaign featuring Olympian and organ recipient Chris Klug. He joins Secretary White and Connie Payton to promote the organ/tissue donor program.

2003 – The Organ Donor Leave Act is passed providing paid time off for state employees who donate an organ, bone marrow, blood or blood platelets.

2003 – The first *Life Goes On* newsletter is published.

2004 – Secretary of State Jesse White and his administration form a task force, partnering with other agencies to examine all aspects of First Person Consent (legal consent for donation) and how it could benefit Illinois.

2005 – **First Person Consent legislation is passed in the 2005 Illinois legislative session.**

2005 – Rotary International signs on to help promote donation.

2005 – *Life Goes On* is presented to the National Division of Transplantation in Washington, D.C. Illinois is recognized as the state with the “first accessible donor registry in the nation and a model for other states.”

2006 – **First Person Consent law goes into effect January 1.** This law specifies that individuals at least 18-years-old who sign up to be donors have given their legal consent to do so. Family permission is no longer required; however, those under the age of 18 can no longer be asked the donor question because they are minors and legally unable to make a legal decision for themselves.

2006 – The First Person Consent registry reaches one million in August.

2007 – The Illinois Donor Registry reaches 2.5 million registrants.

2007 – The *Life Goes On* newsletter wins an International AAMVA PACE award.

2007 – Secretary of State Jesse White announces a PSA for radio to celebrate National Donor Sabbath. The commercial is distributed to approximately 40 religious radio stations.

2008 – The new registry tops three-million people registered.

2008 – A new campaign featuring Brittney and Jarrett Payton, daughter and son of the late Chicago Bears player Walter Payton who died needing a liver transplant, is unveiled in April during National Donate Life Month.

2008 – In cooperation with Donate Life Illinois, Secretary of State Jesse White launches a pilot program to send letters to all Illinois drivers who are turning age 18 and reminding them to register as organ/tissue donors.

2009 – Secretary of State Jesse White announces a statewide campaign with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Illinois to promote organ/tissue donation. A *Life Goes On* committee is created in Danville.

2009 – Legislation is signed allowing coroners and the Cook County Medical Examiner to access the new registry by contacting the Secretary of State Police Inquiry Unit.

2009 – Secretary White is featured on a star flora graph on the Organ/Tissue Donor float at the Rose Bowl Parade in California.

2010 – Secretary of State Jesse White unveils a new organ/tissue donation campaign featuring the heart transplant story of the daughter of Chicago Bears cornerback Charles Tillman.

2010 – The Secretary of State’s Organ/Tissue Donor Registry reaches 5 million.

2010 – National Donor Sabbath is honored by a Sing for Life event in Peoria. Secretary White raises awareness about the registry and local church choirs participate in the event.

2010 – Secretary White is recognized by Northern Illinois University for his efforts to increase organ/tissue donation.

2010 – The Secretary of State’s office, in partnership with Gift of Hope and the University of Illinois, is awarded a grant through the HRSA Division of Transplantation to study ways to increase donation and provide education at selected facilities.

2011 – The Community College Registry Program kicks off in partnership with Richland Community College in Decatur.

2011 – Secretary of State Jesse White announces new television and radio ads featuring a 13-year-old heart recipient and Brittney Payton.

2012 – The Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Registry observes its 20th anniversary.

2012 – A new ad campaign features Vikki Tulcus, who worked as a coordinator for the Organ/Tissue Donor Program, who found herself in need of a kidney.

2012 – The Community College Registry Program expands to include all community colleges in Illinois.

2012 – The *Be a Hero* community college registration challenge launches at community colleges throughout the state.

2013 – A new ad campaign is released featuring Vikki Tulcus who died waiting for a kidney.

2013 – The Library Campaign is revamped and relaunched.

2013 – Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White joins Rev. James T. Meeks at Salem Baptist Church of Chicago House of Hope Worship Center to hold one of the largest single-day organ/tissue registration drives, with 785 people becoming part of the registry.

2013 – The *Wave Away the Waiting* campaign is launched in observance of National Minority Donor Awareness Week in August. In Chicago, donor staff creates a multi-level minority awareness outdoor event that includes a press conference by Secretary of State Jesse White aimed at encouraging minorities to join the donor registry. Other minority donor events are held statewide including a candle lighting ceremony in Decatur.

2013 – More than 700 health fairs, festivals and events are attended by donor program staff who registers hundreds.

2014 – The Health Department and organ donor program partnership is reinitiated.

2014 – A new ad campaign launched in April for National Donate Life Month shows how all Illinoisans can become heroes by joining the state's Organ/Tissue Donor Registry.

2014 – The Light up the Sky Campaign is initiated in Chicago when the Wrigley Building, Crain's Communication and Blue Cross Blue Shield Light celebrate organ/tissue donation by lighting their buildings for a weekend in April.

2015 – A new ad campaign is unveiled in April for National Donate Life Month that features a dying daughter who gave her mother the gift of sight through cornea donation.

2016 – A new campaign, *Reignite*, is launched, focusing on reigniting the enthusiasm of Driver Services facility staff for donation throughout Illinois.

2016 – The Driver Services facilities countertop display initiative is updated to feature new local community recipients and donor family members' stories.

2016 – More than 700 health fairs, festivals and other donor events are held statewide where donor program staff held donor registration drives registering hundreds.

2016 – The first annual National DMV Appreciation Week is implemented.

2016 – A new National Donor Sabbath PSA is released that features lung recipient Reverend Joseph Kyles of Promise Church of Chicago and heart recipient and WVON radio personality Pam Morris-Walton.

<http://www.lifegoeson.com/media/PSA/donorsabbath16.mp3>

2017 – Secretary of State Jesse White introduces legislation is introduced that would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to join the Illinois Donor Registry.

2017 – A new “*What If*” campaign is implemented in April during National Donate Life Month with brochures, ads and public service announcements. Transplant recipients asked the question, “What if I had not received my transplant?”

2017 – The Secretary of State Organ/Tissue Donor Program partners with the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign to launch a messaging campaign utilizing point-of-decision materials; video monitors are strategically placed inside of ten vehicle service facilities; and clerk trainings to disseminate organ and tissue donation messages.

2018 – Effective Jan. 1, 2018, 16- and 17-year-olds are allowed to join the Illinois Donor Registry.

2018 – National Donate Life Month activities feature the newly implemented high school program targeting 16- and 17-year-old students. Secretary of State Jesse White makes statewide visits to high schools.

2018 – Secretary of State Jesse White hosts the bi-annual Poster Contest awards ceremony in April.

2018 – The *Life Goes On* program receives the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) Public Affairs and Consumer Education (PACE) award for National Donor Sabbath radio public service announcement. The program has received numerous PACE awards over the years for its dynamic public service announcements and informative donor program newsletters.

2018 – The *Life Goes On* committee in Springfield decorated a holiday tree that wins the award for Best Theme in Springfield Memorial Hospital foundation’s Festival of Trees annual event.

2018 – At the end of the year, more than 54,000 16- and 17-year-olds had registered as donors, bringing the Illinois Donor Registry total to 6.6 million.

2019 – Secretary White kicks off the state’s Organ/Tissue Donor Awareness campaign in April for National Donate Life Month. The campaign highlights 11-year-old heart recipient Sofia Sanchez, who received a special visit from Grammy Award-winning artist, Drake, while awaiting her heart transplant. The campaign included a commercial that ran statewide throughout April. Secretary White made numerous appearances at events with Sofia promoting the lifesaving program.

2019 – Secretary White hosts the 7th annual minority awareness event — “Wave Away the Waiting” — on Aug. 6 at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago. The events featured a health fair with 22 vendors, a donor registration drive, speakers and entertainment with a special performance by the Jesse White Tumbling Team.

2019 – In October, donor registration numbers for 16- and 17-year-olds reach nearly 90,000.

2019 – Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White was honored with the National Donate Life America DMV Innovation Award by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) of Region 3.

