



ALEXI GIANNOULIAS

Secretary of State

August 8, 2023

Giannoulas Highlights Need For Organ Donation Among Minorities During National Minority Donor Awareness Month

In honor of National Minority Donor Awareness Month, Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulas joined community groups, leaders, donor families and recipients to highlight the need for minorities and people of color to join the state's organ donation registry.

"My hope is that communities across Illinois of all backgrounds, races and ethnicities can be informed and have a positive outlook on organ donation and its life-saving impacts," Giannoulas said. "There is an especially great need for organ donation within communities of color, and the more people learn about it, the more likely they are to be donors."

During this month, Giannoulas is working to create a positive culture around organ donation in multicultural communities through outreach and education.

According to data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Black people have the greatest need for organ transplants, specifically for kidneys, hearts and lungs.

Of the total number of people waiting for a transplant in Illinois, more than 36% are Black, 22% are Hispanic and 6% are Asian American. There is a pressing need for greater organ donation participation in minority communities, as several kidney, heart, lungs, liver and pancreas diseases are more prevalent among them.

While transplants are not matched according to race or ethnicity, people of color who are waiting for an organ transplant will have a better chance of receiving one if there are more donors from their racial or ethnic background. Matches between donors and recipients of different races and ethnicities are very common. Still, compatible blood types and tissue markers are more likely to be found among people of the same race or ethnicity.

"The more diverse our organ donor registry, the more likely we will be able to find matches and save the lives of all those in need of a transplant," Giannoulas said.

At an August 8 press conference in Chicago, Giannoulas was joined by State Senator Elgie Sims, Jr.; State Representative Marcus Evans, Jr.; Cook County Commissioner and double lung transplant recipient Dennis Deer; Village of Matteson Mayor Sheila Chalmers-Currin; 8th Ward Alderwoman Michelle Harris; Lanetha Guider, mother of an organ donor; Cris Ann Hernandez, who is on the waiting list for a kidney; Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network President/CEO Dr. Harry Wilkins; Mid-America Transplant President/CEO Kevin Lee; and National Kidney Foundation of Illinois CEO Jacqueline Burgess-Bishop.

To become a donor, Illinoisans can register with the Secretary of State's Organ and Tissue Donor Registry by visiting LifeGoesOn.com, calling 800-210-2106 or signing up at the DMV.

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