
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

BRITISH COLUMBIANS URGED TO REGISTER FOR ORGAN DONATION

VICTORIA – More people in B.C. need to register for organ donation to save lives as demand far outpaces the supply, urged Health Minister George Abbott today at a legislature event as part of National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week from April 22-29.

“Organ donation is literally giving the gift of life but depends entirely upon the generosity of donors and their families,” said Abbott. “There are more than 300 people in B.C. waiting for organ transplants and hundreds more awaiting cornea transplants.”

The BC Transplant Society, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, is campaigning to encourage more people to register as organ donors.

Between April 2006 and April of 2007, a total of 270 organ transplants were performed in the province, compared to 190 during the same period the year before. Of those, nearly 40 per cent were living donor kidney transplants – the highest ever in B.C. However, more work needs to be done.

“The organ donation registry is a living will that ensures donors’ decisions are respected and offers the family solace so they don’t have to make a hard decision at an already difficult time,” said Bill Barrable, provincial executive director of the BC Transplant Society.

In 2006, 27 British Columbians died before receiving a donor organ. Wait times for organ and tissue transplants depend entirely on the availability of organs for transplant. Only 15 per cent of British Columbians have registered their decision on B.C.’s Organ Donor Registry. The BC Transplant Society’s goal for 2007 is to increase the number of new registrants by 55,000.

Within two weeks, Lynn Kennedy went from being a healthy person to someone in a coma and in desperate need of a liver transplant. “I didn’t know it at the time, but my family was preparing to say goodbye... I was so lucky to get a transplant,” said Kennedy. “The transplant has given me the opportunity to watch my kids grow up. My relationships are richer and I want to make the most of the time that I now know is ‘extra’.”

To register as an organ donor or for more information, please visit www.transplant.bc.ca. Organ donor registration forms are also available from any London Drugs, ICBC Driver Services Centre, or by calling the B.C. Transplant Society at 1-800-663-6189.

Media contact: Marisa Adair
Communications Director
Ministry of Health
250 920-8500
250 952-1887 (media line)

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