

For Immediate Release:

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Jesse White Encourages Organ/Tissue Donation for Virtual National Minority Donor Awareness Month

Secretary of State Jesse White is hosting a virtual National Minority Donor Awareness Month “Wave Away the Waiting” to promote organ/tissue donation for multicultural communities at www.LifeGoesOn.com.

“We continue to work to end the wait for those in need of organ donation,” said White. “Unfortunately, minorities are in the greatest need of organ transplants, yet they donate at a lower rate. I encourage everyone to register to become an organ/tissue donor to help give the gift of life to someone in need.”

Nationally, people of color comprise 54 percent of the waiting list for organ transplants; however, this year they accounted for only 35 percent of those who donated organs, according to the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network.

According to the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network in Illinois:

- There are 1,428 African Americans on the waiting list, but in 2020 only 129 African Americans became donors.
- There are 784 Hispanic Americans on the waiting list, but last year only 71 Hispanic Americans became donors.
- There are 228 Asian Americans on the waiting list, but only nine Asian Americans became organ donors in 2020.

In Illinois, more than 7.1 million people are registered as organ/tissue donors, yet there are approximately 4,000 people waiting for transplants and each year 300 people in Illinois die because of the shortage of organs.

People of color are disproportionately affected by illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes, which can lead to the need for dialysis or a kidney transplant, increasing the number of patients on the organ transplant waiting list, according to United Network for Organ Sharing.

“The need for minority organ, eye and tissue donors is critical,” said Dr. Harry Wilkins, President/CEO at Gift of Hope. “Nearly 60% of the more than 100,000 men, women and children waiting for lifesaving organ transplants in the U.S. are from minority communities.”

Illinoisans can register with the Secretary of State’s Organ/Tissue Donor Registry online at www.LifeGoesOn.com or by calling 1-800-210-2106.